Voting & Civic Engagement Action Plan

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I. Executive Summary

In 2012 the National Endowment for the Arts established a model for how art works within society and discovered a strong positive correlation between arts participation and civic engagement. This was identified among other benefits that support democracy, such as tolerance of diversity, openness to inquiry, and reinforcement of productive ways for participating within a group. Furthermore, the Institute for Democracy & Higher Education promotes democracy not only as a system of governance, but also as a culture that defines the way people live and work together. Taken as a process that mediates among differing and often conflicting worldviews of justice, equity, and individual autonomy, liberal democracy is represented in artistic works as well as in the freedom of the artistic process itself. Democracy, like art, mediates our collective values.

Democracy draws upon values that can inform how we collectively solve social and environmental problems. In this sense, our democracy rises from shared tenets such as distributed authority, tolerance for dissent, independent thought and speech, and an open reciprocity of information. Contemporary arts education stresses not only technical skills but also the development of critical and individualistic thinking, openness to diverse perspectives, active listening and communication, analysis of information, self-reflection—and increasingly—civic responsibility and action. Such learning outcomes are essential for artists who aim to produce meaningful work that impacts society; work that contributes to political discourse by bringing new information to light, revealing and speaking against injustice, and creating the conditions for empathy that motivate others toward action. Art, like democracy, mediates the balance of power.

This action plan has been established not only to increase voter registration and turnout within the Cornish community, but also to address the potential of civic engagement to sow division among the community. The recent level of vitriolic rhetoric from both the public and political candidates raises concern that the election process could impact campus by increasing polarization between groups based on real or suspected ideologies, resulting in protests, counter protests, and pressure for faculty and administrators to make position statements on behalf of the institution. By taking a proactive approach we can leverage ongoing equity and inclusion work in the curriculum and co-curriculum and coordinate our efforts to offer constructive programming before and following the election.

This action plan, created by VOiCE (Voting and Civic Engagement) Working Group Co-Chairs, Dr. Brian Harlan, Provost & Vice President of Academic Affairs, and Kaitlyn Vallance, Assistant Dean of Student Affairs will be implemented at Cornish College of the Arts sole campus in Seattle, Washington. VOiCE Co-Chairs will oversee the implementation of this plan, which has goals slated through Fall 2026. Due to VOiCE being a newly formed group, we created goals for ensuring this information is disseminated to a diverse audience and that VOiCE itself consists

of a diverse coalition of stakeholders through regular evaluation of membership and active recruitment each academic year. We will primarily be focused on accomplishing our short term goals of an October Voter registration drive and solidifying VOiCE membership, scope and goals as they relate to our strategic planning efforts.

II. Leadership

Working Group Members

Cornish College of the Arts has established a working group for both the ALL IN Campus Challenge and continued Civic Learning and Engagement initiatives on campus called VOiCE: Voting and Civic Engagement. As this working group was established in August 2024, we are continually assessing membership of this group to ensure we maximize stakeholder participation across the campus to best meet the needs and goals of our action plan.

Currently, VOiCE consists of:

Academic and Student Affairs Division Staff

- Brian Harlan, Provost & Vice President of Academic Affairs
- Kaitlyn Vallance, Assistant Dean of Student Affairs (ADSA)
- Bridget Nowlin, Director of Library Services
- Mia Ballesteros, Student Affairs Coordinator
- Chris Sumption, Writing Center Director

Faculty

- Justine Way, Humanities and Sciences Chair & Core Faculty Member
- Chris Sumption, Humanities & Sciences Core Faculty Member

Operations & Creative Spaces and Events Services Staff

- Pinky Estell, Director of Operations & CSES

As VOiCE is a newly formed working group at Cornish College of the Arts, the role of each member of VOiCE is still being determined while we work to implement our civic engagement & learning initiatives on campus. Traditionally, the Cornish Library and the Office of Student Life have partnered on smaller voter engagement initiatives, primarily in the form of passive programming, voter registration assistance, and tabling. These initiatives had never been formally established as a routine aspect of Cornish's civic engagement & learning programming. We are optimistic that our participation in ALL IN: Campus Democracy Challenge will provide us the framework to both formally document efforts we have made in the past and create a holistic plan for greater campus-wide participation in our efforts.

Need for Expanding Student, Faculty, and Community Partnerships

In our goals section, we will outline our goals for increasing membership in VOiCE, including which areas of the college we will prioritize outreach to and what outside organizations we hope to build relationships with within and outside of the Seattle area.

Senior & Mid-Level Administrative Leadership

Given the current composition of VOiCE includes the Provost & Vice President of Academic Affairs, the Assistant Dean of Student Affairs, and three Department Directors, we have significant buy-in from college administrators. The Co-Chairs of VOiCE, Provost & Vice President of Academic Affairs, Brian Harlan and Assistant Dean of Student Affairs, Kaitlyn Vallance, have played and will continue to play a significant role in the planning and implementation stages VOiCE's Voting & Civic Engagement Action Plan through:(1) creating and managing timelines for VOiCE initiatives; (2) facilitating working group meetings; (3) resourcing and problem-solving with individuals tasked with implementing various goals and strategies in our plan; and (4) evaluating the success of these initiatives.

As a small, private college, administrators, staff and faculty tend to be asked to serve on multiple projects at once and high workloads can contribute to attrition and/or low engagement from members of working groups, committees, task forces, etc. We acknowledge that reality can be a potential challenge for sustaining engagement and participation in VOiCE. In order to proactively address that potential challenge to the VOiCE's ability to continuous engage in voting and civic engagement initiatives, we hope to invite additional members to participate in VOiCE as "alternative representatives" for their areas and departments in the event that the primary representative is unable to participate in the group for any length of time. These "alternative representatives" would be invited to join our Shared Drive with our materials and meeting minutes so they are informed about the activities of the group when they are not expected to attend. This is a common practice of Cornish's Staff Council, who have primary and alternate representatives for the ex-officio role in Faculty Senate.

Communication and Meeting Timeline

VOiCE has created a Google Shared Drive which will host our meeting minutes and relevant materials for the creation and implementation of our Voting & Civic Engagement Action Plan. In our goals section, we will share goals and tactics for communicating VOiCE's work to the broader community.

VOiCE does not currently have a regular meeting schedule as our working group was newly formed in August. In our goals section, we will outline our intentions for how frequently VOiCE will convene and opportunities for reporting out to the community in a routine manner.

Succession Planning

Currently, Provost Brian Harlan and ADSA Kaitlyn Vallance are responsible for the oversight of VOiCE. However, supporting voting and civic engagement initiatives at Cornish is not explicitly stated in either Provost Harlan or ADSA Vallance's job descriptions, nor any existing current job description at Cornish College of the Arts. In order to create a seamless leadership transition for VOiCE should either Provost Harlan or ADSA Vallance leave Cornish, we will undergo an evaluation of job descriptions for members of VOiCE, namely the Assistant Dean of Student Affairs and Director of Library Services job descriptions. Both the Assistant Dean of

Student Affairs and the Director of Library Services positions have proposed and/or facilitated voting and civic engagement initiatives and programs on campus, often in collaboration with each other, and these positions could easily have voting and civic engagement programming responsibilities integrated into their job descriptions. By having voting and civic engagement responsibilities in two job descriptions, albeit, with different scope and expectations, we can ensure the Director of Library Services, who is not currently a Co-Chair of VOiCE, could step into the role as an interim Co-Chair with either the Provost or Assistant Dean of Student Affairs should either leave Cornish College of the Arts for a significant period of time or indefinitely.

A long term goal for Cornish College of the Arts could be advocating for a staff position that is specifically tailored towards voting and civic engagement work. This is likely not a position Cornish would prioritize in the immediate future based on the more pressing staffing needs articulated in our current Strategic Plan. As that is an aspirational goal that likely extends beyond the 2025 - 2026 academic year, we will not be including it in our goals section, though it is a goal for VOiCE to consider when creating our next action plan.

III. Commitment

Cornish College of the Arts Value of Civic Engagement

The mission and vision of Cornish College of the Arts aligns well with our goals to increase voting and civic engagement among our student body; develop a campus-wide culture of civic engagement, civic learning, and democratic participation; and better understand the role of the "artist" and "citizen" in affecting local, state, and national policies, laws, and political leadership.

The Cornish College of the Arts "Mission Statement" states:

> The mission of Cornish College of the Arts is to provide students aspiring to become practicing artists with an educational program of the highest possible quality, in an environment that nurtures creativity and intellectual curiosity, while preparing them to contribute to society as **artists, citizens, and innovators**.

The Cornish College of the Arts "Statement on Difference and Inclusion" further elaborates on our mission to develop our students into artists who positively contribute to the greater communities we exist in:

> We hold ourselves responsible to fulfill the mission of Cornish by preparing students "to contribute to society as **artists, citizens, and innovators**," and believe that **the mission is best served by actively cultivating a positive environment in which to explore and express the diverse perspectives of a pluralistic society.**

Cornish's "Statement on Difference and Inclusion" was created and communicated out to the Cornish community via our website in 2020, as a result of conversations and demonstrations in the Seattle area (and nationwide) in the wake of the murder of George Floyd. The "Statement on Difference and Inclusion," as well as the resource page created by Cornish's former Office of Institutional Equity, are still active and contain links for getting involved in a variety of organizations and projects nationwide. The highlighted organizations include: Campaign Zero, The Center for Popular Democracy, and Fair Fight. Each of these highlighted organizations encourages social change enacted through civic engagement and democratic participation.

Our former President, Dr. Raymond-Tymas Jones, affirmed the power of the individual in affecting change and our responsibility for doing so in a March 2021 letter to the campus community, where he states: "As a community of artists, citizens, and innovators, we have a responsibility to drive change in this world. I ask that each of us reflect on the ways we, as individuals, can make a change."

As demonstrated through these examples of Cornish College of the Arts' public-facing communications, Cornish's mission and vision for our community are well-grounded in an understanding of the power of civic engagement and democratic participation. From public

statements made by the President during a time of fear and social unrest to the overarching, long-established mission of our college, the role of the artist as "citizen" is emphasized consistently as a core tenet of our educational and community values at Cornish.

Worthy of mention is how the "citizen" aspect of our mission statement and communications is understood in the context of our community. Cornish College of the Arts does not use the word "citizen" to differentiate between members of our community who meet the legal criteria for U.S. citizenship and those who do not. Rather, a "citizen" is an individual who recognizes their role in the greater context(s) they exist within and seeks to positively impact their environment(s) and others around them through active change-making - a sentiment alluded to in the "Statement on Difference and Inclusion."

Our student body, faculty, staff, administration and Board of Trustees are all highly familiar with the Cornish "Mission Statement" and are often heard quoting the "artist, citizen, innovator" portion, especially during our New Student Orientation. This familiarity and affection for the Cornish "Mission Statement" and the goal of nurturing artist-citizen-innovators will be helpful to VOiCE when gaining buy-in from the campus community as we can easily frame our work as being in service to one or more aspects of the mission statement.

Division of Student Affairs Student Learning Outcomes

The Division of Student Affairs consists of the Office of Student Life, Counseling Services, and Housing & Residence Life and reports directly to the Provost & Vice President of Academic Affairs. The Office of Student Life, which consists of the Dean of Student Affairs, the Assistant Dean of Student Affairs, one Student Success Coach, and the Student Affairs Coordinator, are located on the first floor of our sole residence hall, the Cornish Commons. The Counseling Services offices are located directly behind the Office of Student Life and the Housing & Residence Life offices are located two floors above the Office of Student Life. This centralized location for all Student Affairs staff within a building the majority of our students occupy is a considerable strength when it comes to collaborating on student events, programs, and issues.

Of the five Division of Student Affairs Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs), two SLOs in particular relate to VOiCE's plan for increasing voting and civic engagement:

> **Community Engagement and Social Responsibility**
> Students will demonstrate an understanding of the importance of community involvement and actively participate in community-building activities, showcasing their ability to collaborate, lead, and contribute positively to their local and global communities.
>
> **Personal and Professional Development**
> Students will create and pursue personal development plans that integrate academic learning with co-curricular experiences, preparing them for successful careers, vocations, and responsible citizenship.

In addition to the SLOs directly related to developing our students' understanding of and participation in activities that contribute to their role as a "citizen," the Division of Student

Affairs has SLOs tied to co-curricular learning and student leadership development. The Division of Student Affairs is committed to creating and facilitating programs to increase voting and civic engagement among the student body. Historically, the Office of Student Life has provided passive programming to encourage voting participation through tabling in the campus dining area, Nellie's Cafe; posting informational materials about voting; and posting interactive, physical discussion "boards" within the Cornish Commons which invite students to add their thoughts to questions about civic engagement and their role as "citizens" at Cornish and beyond. The Division of Student Affairs seeks to expand this programming through partnerships with existing Registered Student Organizations (RSOs) and the facilitation of new RSOs geared towards civic engagement.

The Division of Student Affairs oversees not only the RSOs at Cornish College of the Arts, but also the Cornish Student Senate (CSS), an elected body of student representatives from across the college who advocate for student issues and priorities on campus. Given the CSS is an elected body, we engage our student population in learning about voter participation and civic engagement through the campus elections process. Interested students seeking to be elected to the CSS are expected to run campaigns, abide by campaigning rules, engage the community actively to understand their key priorities and expectations for a CSS representative, and encourage high voter participation. Students who are not running campaigns are still engaged in the elections process as they are invited to assess and consider the strengths and weaknesses of each candidate and cast their vote for their top 6 choices. Students are also encouraged to attend the CSS weekly Open Meetings to voice their concerns, advocate for change, and hold their elected representatives accountable.

IV. Landscape

Voter and Civic Engagement Learning Opportunities within the Curriculum

Cornish College of the Arts has been actively working with our accreditation body, the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities (NWCCU), since 2021 to shift from using primarily program-specific learning outcomes to assessing Institutional Learning Outcomes (ILOs) for all students. This was an effort to better align with the 2020 NWCCU standards. All students are assessed on meeting ILOs via our General Education Program, known as "Humanities and Sciences."

The ten General Education Program LOs, which also represent our ten ILOs are:

- Effective Written Communication
  - Success is measured through assessing student outcomes in our year-long First-Year Writing courses, a one semester Writing Intensive, and a one semester second-year Professional Practices in the Arts course.
- Effective Oral Communication
  - Success is measured through assessing student outcomes via Professional Practices in the Arts course.
- Information Literacy
  - Success is measured through assessing student outcomes via First-Year Writing Curriculum courses.
- Critical Thinking
  - Success is measured through assessing student outcomes via one semester First-Year Liberal Arts Seminar.
- Effective Reading
  - Success is measured through assessing student outcomes via one semester First-Year Liberal Arts Seminar.
- Critique Practice / Peer Review Practice
  - Success is measured through assessing student outcomes via Professional Practices in the Arts course.
- **Historical Methodology and Global Learning**
  - **Success is measured through assessing student outcomes via one "Histories of the Arts" course and one "Global Learning" course taken after the first year.**
- Integrative Learning
  - Success is measured through assessing student outcomes via one "Integrative Learning" course taken after the first year.
- Scientific Reasoning
  - Success is measured through assessing student outcomes via one "Biological / Physical Science" course taken after the first year.

Of these ILOs, "Global Learning" has been explicitly tied to our goal of creating "citizens" at Cornish College of the Arts; however, as our institutional learning outcomes are broadly defined, any course within Humanities and Sciences could reasonably include content related to voter and civic engagement.

Per the "2023 - 2024 Course Catalog," courses that satisfy the "Global Learning" requirement:

> engage questions about what it means to be a global citizen and enable students to build knowledge of diversity, equity, and social justice. This requirement includes courses across disciplines such as the sciences, mathematics, social sciences, and the arts and humanities, including creative and academic writing.

Examples of our "Global Learning" courses offered by Humanities and Sciences include: HS

280: Unpacking the Political, HS 380: Islam in the US, HS 220: Environmental Science and Sustainability, and HS 280: Introduction to Sociology.

In addition to the Humanities and Sciences courses that meet our "Global Learning" requirement, there are course offerings within our academic departments which touch upon civic engagement and the socio-political forces that shape how and why individuals create and/or interpret art and art-making. Examples of these include courses in our Interior Architecture program (IN 333: History of Interior Architecture), our Fine Art program (AR 233: Global Modern Art History), and our Theater program (TH 361: Modern Theater History & Theory).

Our Humanities and Sciences courses, like our in-major academic courses, are open to all students, regardless of major and class standing.

Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement in the Co-Curriculum

As addressed in previous sections, the Division of Student Affairs and the Cornish Library provide co-curricular opportunities for civic learning and democratic engagement. This takes the form of voter registration drives, passive programming (informational materials, online resources, public discussion "boards"), and, specific to the Office of Student Life, the oversight of the Cornish Student Senate.

Assessment Data for Campus Climate

At this time, Cornish College of the Arts does not participate in the NSLVE and we do not have data to assess the political climate and democratic engagement on campus.

In 2021, Cornish administered the Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventory (NLSSI) survey, which includes 98 questions consistent across all Noel Levitz Student Satisfaction Inventories administered at participating campuses, as well as ten Cornish-specific statements. When the survey was administered in Spring 2021, roughly 25% of our student body participated, which is statistically significant enough to extrapolate the feelings of the student body as a whole. One of the questions specific to Cornish in the 2021 NLSSI survey was:

79	Some of my classes include discussion on inclusivity, diversity, and being an informed citizen.	6.39	5.50	0.89

Students who participated in the 2021 NLSSI shared that discussion on inclusivity, diversity and being an informed citizen were important to them (6.39 out of 7.0 for importance) and that they were somewhat satisfied with their experiences of class discussions on those topics (5.50 out of 7.0). Our performance gap is .89, which indicates moderate satisfaction overall.

While this is positive, this single question in a single survey from 2021 is not adequate to fully understand the political climate among our student body. As a small, private, performing and visual arts college in Seattle, Washington, we could easily make generalizations and assumptions about the political beliefs and leanings of our student body; however, in the absence of data that speaks to what students perceive as the political climate on campus, those generalizations and assumptions are grounded in anecdotes and stereotypes and would not be

relevant to discuss here.

Internal Barriers to Success

A significant barrier to Cornish's success in providing comprehensive curricular and co-curricular offerings for civic learning and engagement on our campus is limited financial and human resources to complete this work. We have many strengths that work in our favor, including responsive leadership, interested faculty and staff, and our location in the heart of downtown Seattle. However, as we improve our student enrollment, retention and persistence rates at Cornish post-pandemic, we are still recovering financially from the challenges COVID posed for a small performing and visual arts college. Our ability to fund certain initiatives, such as campus speakers, is limited. Our ability to identify current staff who have the capacity to dedicate significant amounts of time to voting and civic engagement within their existing workload and responsibilities is a challenge. Our ability to create new positions to prioritize that work is a challenge as well.

Despite the internal barriers, we have several internal and external strengths and very few, if any, external barriers that prevent VOiCE from being successful in implementing this action plan. The VOiCE working group is optimistic about our ability to implement small-scale programs and initiatives for increasing civic and democratic engagement among our student body in a manner that honors the realities of working at a college with limited internal resources. We also hope that registering to participate in NSLVE will empower us with the information we need to make more informed decisions about engaging our student body in future elections.

Demographic Composition of Cornish's Student Body

State Residency

While we do not have the data from NSLVE or other resources to understand voter and civic engagement among the various student "types" at Cornish, we believe the data we do have about our students may be helpful in planning and implementing our Action Plan.

Currently, 60% of our total student body is from Washington State. After Washington State, out-of-state students tend to arrive at Cornish from the following five states: California, Oregon, Hawaii, Colorado and Texas.

State Residency			
State	Total Number of Students	% of Student Body (488 total enrollment)	% of Total Out-of-State Students (195 total)
Washington	293	60%	N/A
California	50	10%	26%
Oregon	27	5%	14%
Hawaii	11	2%	6%
Colorado	11	2%	6%
Texas	11	2%	6%

Given the majority of our students are from the state of Washington State, this will make it considerably easier to assist them with voter registration and identify options for voting within Seattle. Knowing that the majority of our out-of-state students are from one of the five states listed above (56% of all out-of-state students are from one of these five states) allows us to strategically gather resources relevant to voting requirements in those states.
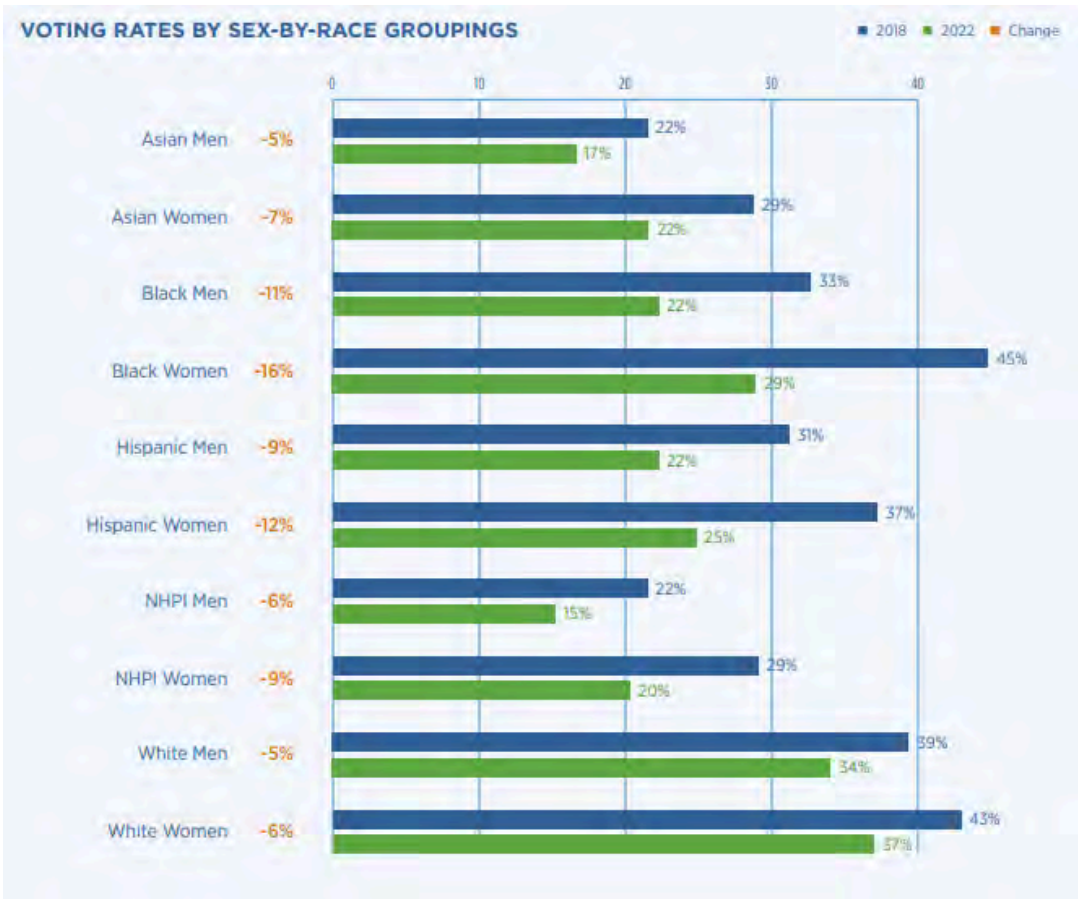
Gender, Race & Ethnicity

The gender and racial/ethnic composition of Cornish's student body lends itself well to a potentially higher rate of voter engagement than peer institutions if our students vote in alignment with voting trends identified in the 2022 NSLVE National Report.

Reported Gender				
CLASS LEVEL	Nonbinary/Other	Female	Male	Grand Total
FRESHMAN	22	129	45	196
SOPHOMORE	10	93	37	140
JUNIOR	10	49	29	88
SENIOR	7	40	17	64
Grand Total	49	311	128)	488
% of Total	10%	64%	26%	

Race/Ethnicity										
CLASS LEVEL	American Indian or Alaska Native	Asian	Black or African American	Hispanics of any race	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	Noncitizen	Race and Ethnicity unknown	Two or more races	White	Grand Total
FRESHMAN	2	5	15	22	1	2	24	23	102	196
SOPHOMORE	0	9	6	4	1	3	22	16	79	140
JUNIOR	1	4	2	1	0	3	9	4	64	88
SENIOR	1	4	4	0	0	0	6	6	43	64
Grand Total	4	22	27	27	2	8	61	49	288	488
% of Total	<1%	5%	5%	5%	<1%	2%	13%	10%	59%	100%

According to the NSLVE in their 2022 National Report, voting rates by sex-by-race are as follows:

VOTING RATES BY SEX-BY-RACE GROUPINGS — 2018, 2022, Change

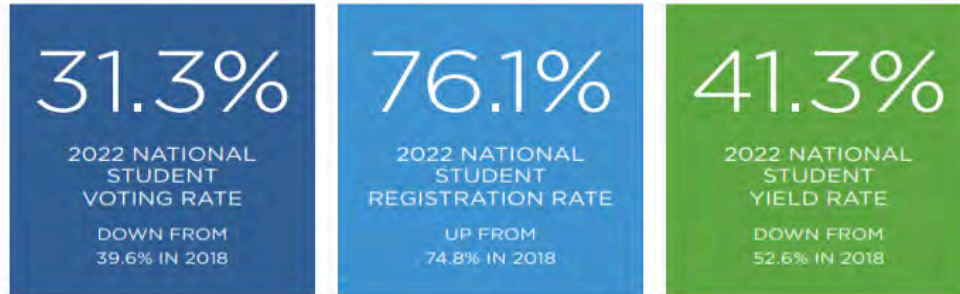| Group	Change	2018	2022
Asian Men	-5%	22%	17%
Asian Women	-7%	29%	22%
Black Men	-11%	33%	22%
Black Women	-16%	45%	29%
Hispanic Men	-9%	31%	22%
Hispanic Women	-12%	37%	25%
NHPI Men	-6%	22%	15%
NHPI Women	-9%	29%	20%
White Men	-5%	39%	34%
White Women	-6%	43%	37%

Cornish College of the Arts is currently a "Primarily White Institution" (PWI), with nearly 60% of our students self-identifying as white. The "White Men" and "White Women" voting rates are helpful for the VOiCE working group in determining benchmarks for voter engagement goals. Further, with nearly 65% of our student population self-identifying as "Female," we will set a benchmark for overall voter participation that is reflective of the current voting rates for "White Women" from the 2022 NSLVE National Study (37%).

In setting a benchmark based on the voting rates of "White Women," we recognize the significant gaps between the voting rates of white students and students of color. With 40% of our total student body identifying with a race/ethnicity other than "White," it is crucial we engage the Cornish Student Senate, the Cornish Inclusion Team (CIT), and the Cornish Black Student Union (BSU) to develop tactics for encouraging high voting rates among our students of color.
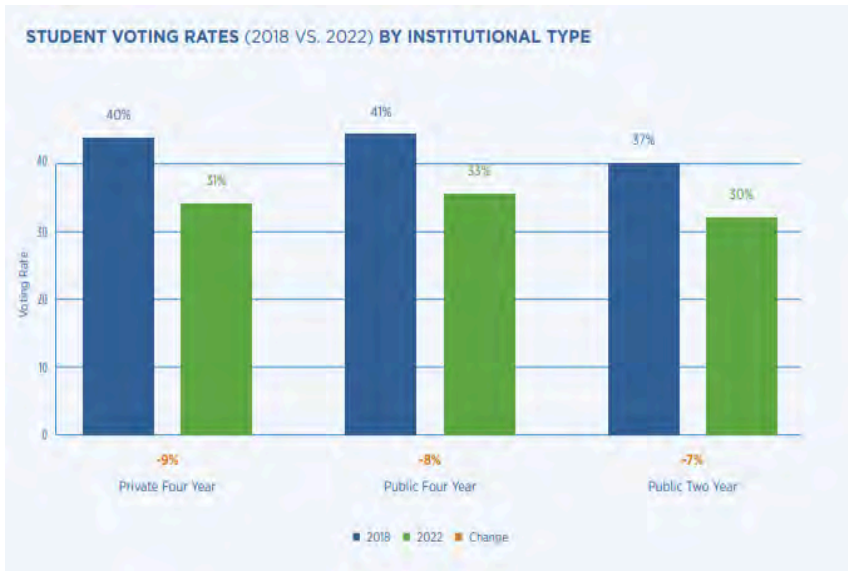
In setting the goal of a 37% voting rate among Cornish students for elections occurring during the 2024 - 2025 academic years, Cornish would be striving to exceed, though modestly, the 2022 National Voting Student Rate, as outlined in the 2022 NSLVE National Study.

2022: Student-Level Data

31.3%
2022 NATIONAL STUDENT VOTING RATE
DOWN FROM 39.6% IN 2018

76.1%
2022 NATIONAL STUDENT REGISTRATION RATE
UP FROM 74.8% IN 2018

41.3%
2022 NATIONAL STUDENT YIELD RATE
DOWN FROM 52.6% IN 2018

Institution Type & Geography

Based on the information provided in the 2022 NSLVE National Study, a voter turnout rate of 37% would exceed the 2022 national student voting average of 31.3%. A 37% voter turnout rate would also be consistent with voter turnout averages for other urban (33%), private, four-year (31%) colleges and universities in 2022.

STUDENT VOTING RATES (2018 VS. 2022) **BY INSTITUTIONAL TYPE**

	Private Four Year	Public Four Year	Public Two Year
2018	40%	41%	37%
2022	31%	33%	30%
Change	-9%	-8%	-7%

STUDENT VOTING RATES (2018 VS. 2022) **BY GEOGRAPHY**

	City	Suburb	Town	Rural
2018	42%	40%	36%	38%
2022	33%	31%	32%	32%
Change	-9%	-9%	-4%	-6%

Lastly, while the 2022 NSLVE National Report does not provide an exact picture of voter turnout rates for students attending Washington State colleges and universities, the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE) allows us insight into how a 37% "youth" voter turnout rate would compare to the state average.

State	2014 Youth Turnout Rate	2018 Youth Turnout Rate	2022 Youth Turnout Rate	Change in Youth Turnout, 2018-2022
Michigan	15.3%	32.7%	36.5%	3.8
Maine	30.5%	36.4%	35.8%	-0.6
Minnesota	23.1%	43.7%	35.5%	-8.2
Oregon	27.4%	39.2%	35.5%	-3.7
Colorado	27.6%	40.8%	33.1%	-7.7
Pennsylvania	12.2%	30.0%	31.7%	1.7
Washington	16.4%	35.0%	28.7%	-6.3
Montana	17.6%	42.1%	28.2%	-13.9
Georgia	13.3%	33.0%	26.0%	-7
Iowa	22.1%	34.7%	26.0%	-8.7
Vermont	10.6%	29.0%	25.7%	-3.3
Arizona	9.8%	25.9%	24.8%	-1.1
Nevada	8.8%	28.7%	24.5%	-4.2

CIRCLE's "State-by-State Youth Voter Turnout Data and the Impact of Election Laws in 2022" article expands upon factors that could have led to the various voter turnout rates above:

> Data is available for 6 of the 8 states that automatically sent mail-in ballots to all registered voters in 2022. Three of them—**Colorado, Oregon, and Washington**, all of which have had all vote-by-mail elections since 2014 or earlier—were among the top 7 states with the highest youth turnout in the midterms.

As previously stated, Washington, Oregon and Colorado are three of the top six states Cornish students are legal residents of and VOiCE will certainly encourage our high number of students from Washington, Oregon and Colorado to avail themselves of the vote-by-mail option.

Our benchmark of 37% voter turnout in 2024 also appears to greatly exceed the 2022 youth turnout rate for Washington State (28.7%), as well as exceeding both Colorado (33.1%) and Oregon (35.5%).

Voter Registration Goal & NSLVE

Cornish College of the Arts is not currently a participating college in NSLVE; however, we will hopefully become one in October 2024. We are hopeful our efforts to register students to vote will result in a voter registration rate of 75%, which would be slightly lower than the national registration rate highlighted in the 2022 NSLVE National Study.

Once we have been authorized to participate in the NSLVE and assess the report on registration rates and voter engagement among Cornish students, VOiCE may reconsider our

goals, initiatives, and strategies to better address the gaps between our students' registration and voter engagement rates in comparison to peer institutions and the 2024 national average.

V. Goals

The VOiCE working group seeks to reinforce Cornish's mission of cultivating our students into artists, citizens and innovators. Our short term and long term goals were created with the intention of empowering our students to embrace the "citizen" component of our mission as fully as they do "artist" and "innovator." The long-term vision of VOiCE is to create a campus culture where…

- Civic and democratic engagement are thoughtfully and intentionally integrated into several aspects of campus life - from academic offerings to co-curricular programming.
- Our students, faculty and staff feel supported academically, artistically, professionally and personally when participating in political discourse on campus and trust the college to provide both structured and spontaneous opportunities for these discussions throughout the academic year;
- Our students consistently engage in both curricular and co-curricular activities that provide them the skills, knowledge, and confidence they need to influence the world around them in a positive, values-driven manner.
- All members of the community understand the role of the arts and the artist in affecting social and political change.

Short Term Goals

Within the next three years, VOiCE hopes to fulfill the following eight objectives in support of our long-term goals:

1. Solidify membership of the VOiCE working group and prioritizing the recruitment and inclusion of a diverse array of faculty and student stakeholders. (2024)
2. Solidify the mission, scope and meeting schedule for VOiCE and determine the most effective means for communicating VOiCE updates to the community regularly. (2024)
3. Evaluate job descriptions for current VOiCE members and advocate that voter and civic engagement programming responsibilities be explicitly outlined. (2024 - 2025)
4. Develop strategic partnerships with local, state, and national organizations to increase our access to resources and support for voter and civic engagement initiatives at Cornish. (2024 - 2026)
5. Facilitate a month-long voter registration, education and support drive in October and early November 2024.
6. Plan and create an annual programmatic calendar for each academic year that provides civic and democratic engagement programming in the months of September, October, November, February, March and April. (2024 - 2026)
7. Partner with the Cornish Student Senate, the Cornish Inclusion Team, and the Cornish Black Student Union identify (1) opportunities for collaborative programming and (2) obstacles to student engagement in civic learning and activities. (2024 - 2026)

8. Participate in the NSLVE to better understand student voting habits and create specific strategies for addressing gaps. (2024)
    a. In the event we are able to join the NSLVE prior to the 2024 election, our goal is to have 75% of Cornish students registered to vote and a voter turnout rate of 37% or higher for all students.

Given VOiCE is a newly established working group and Cornish has not previously prioritized meaningful, cross-campus effort to formalize our civic and democratic engagement initiatives, many of our short term goals concern creating the structure and routines of the group for success moving forward. Our ability to successfully meet any tangible goals will require a cohesive, cross-college group who have been provided with high quality information about our students' voting and civic engagement habits, which is the rationale. As we continue to collaborate as a working group on programming and educational needs related to civic and democratic engagement, we will shift our focus from defining *who we are* and *what we do* and move towards evaluating *what we have done thus far* and *how we continuously improve*.

Long Term Goals

Within the next ten years, VOiCE hopes to fulfill the following seven objectives:

1. Exceed an 80% voter registration rate and a 50% voter turnout rate for Cornish students in the 2026 midterm elections. Benchmark future voter registration and turnout goals based on data received from NSLVE. (2026, 2028, 2030, 2032)
2. Utilize NSLVE reports generated for Cornish every two years to identify gaps in the registration and voting rates among different facets of our community (race/ethnicity, age, gender, state residency status) with the goal of closing those gaps in subsequent years. (2024, 2026, 2028, 2030, 2032)
3. Expand membership of VOiCE to include community partners and local election officials. (2030)
4. Create, facilitate and evaluate the success of democratic and civic engagement programming in Cornish New Student Orientation and the Cornish Commons Residential Curriculum. (2028)
5. Assess opportunities to develop institutional and/or program-level student learning outcomes focused specifically on civic and democratic education and engagement. (2034)
6. Collaborate with academic department leadership and Faculty Senate to identify new and existing courses that could be developed to better integrate civic learning and democratic engagement into curricular offerings. (2034)
7. Leverage our campus event spaces in downtown Seattle to become a civic engagement "hub" in the city. This may include hosting local political debates, providing arts-activism workshops to the community, and securing an on-campus polling location open to the greater South Lake Union community. (2034)

VI. Strategy

Short Term Goals

Goal	Action Steps	Purpose	Point Person(s) & Timeline
Solidify membership of the VOiCE working group and prioritizing the recruitment and inclusion of a diverse array of faculty and student stakeholders.	1. Identify key campus positions / individuals absent from the current group. 2. Define time commitment and recruitment strategy. 3. Continually evaluate group composition to ensure it consists of a diverse array of stakeholders and identities.	Since VOiCE is newly established, we have the opportunity to create a diverse, representative working group from the beginning stages. A group with diverse representation will provide a number of perspectives, allowing us to be thoughtful in our strategies and tactics.	VOiCE Co-Chairs Group membership for 2024 - 2026 academic years finalized by the first week of the 2025 Spring semester. Evaluate group composition annually.
Solidify the mission, scope and meeting schedule for VOiCE and determine the most effective means for communicating VOiCE updates to the community regularly.	1. Membership collaborates to propose and approve a mission statement. 2. Membership collaborates to set a standing meeting time and frequency for both the academic year and summer break. 3. Determine whether Canvas, Compass or both are appropriate avenues for sharing communications about VOiCE updates.	Since VOiCE is newly established, we need to create the logistical structure of the group. This will allow students, faculty and staff to better understand how we serve them and the community. By providing transparency about our group's mission, work, and scheduling, we hope to incentivize collaboration between ourselves and interested individuals/groups.	VOiCE Co-Chairs Mission statement approved by the first week of the 2025 Spring semester. Canvas and/or Compass page created and made public by the first week of the 2025 Spring semester.
Facilitate a month-long voter registration, education, and support drive in October and early November 2024.	1. Table in Nellie's Cafe for voter registration and education from 10/7 - 11/5. These tabling dates will also cover National Voter Education Day, Vote Early Day, and Election Hero Day. 2. Engage in passive marketing strategies to increase awareness of voter registration and voting deadlines. 3. Share voter registration information with first year students during Library class visits in October. 4. Bake and decorate cupcakes to celebrate Election Day on 11/5. 5. Screen Election Coverage in Raisbeck on Ivey. 6. Collaborate with Counseling Services to provide walk-in appointments for Election Day.	Cornish has had an inconsistent history of initiatives to encourage voter registration and civic engagement. Traditionally, the work has been taken on by Library Services and Office of Student Life staff, though there is no single position in either office that has been officially made responsible for civic and democratic engagement programming. Historically, Humanities and Sciences and the Writing Center have also supported voter registration initiatives on campus, though they are not formally responsible for doing so either. Now that VOiCE has formed, we can collaborate more effectively on voter registration programming for the next month.	Kaitlyn Vallance oversees the Tabling Schedule Library Services and Office of Student Life staff will create passive programming materials and buttons. Bridget Nowlin will be sharing information during Library class visits in October. Staff Council Fun Committee will provide cupcakes for tabling. Pinky Estell oversees election coverage screening. Counseling Service staff will be available on 11/5 for walk ins.

Evaluate job descriptions (JDs) for current VOiCE members and advocate that voter and civic engagement programming responsibilities be explicitly outlined.	1. Individual VOiCE members review their own JDs and propose potentially means for integrating in voter and civic engagement programming responsibilities to the group. 2. Individual VOiCE members discuss JD updates to their direct supervisors and HR for approval after group discussion and evaluation.	Integrating voter and civic engagement programming responsibilities into JDs contributes to our succession planning goals, by creating a clear means for succession which is tied to positions and not people.	All VOiCE Members Director of Human Resources JDs evaluated by members by the end of Spring 2025 semester. JDs updated by supervisors and Human Resources by the beginning of the Fall 2025 semester.
Develop strategic partnerships with local, state, and national organizations to increase our access to resources and support for voter and civic engagement initiatives at Cornish.	1. Create a list of potential organizations who we believe support the mission of VOiCE. 2. Investigate the benefits of partnering with the listed potential organizations. 3. Invest in 3 - 4 organizations that VOiCE determines best supports our mission and provides the most necessary resources for our work. 4. Maintain continuous contact with the organizations through their preferred means.	As a resource-limited college, Cornish will benefit significantly from the resources and support offered by local, state, and national organizations. Organizations we have collaborated with in the past, such as the Statewide Poverty Action Network, will certainly be on our list to re-engage as they provided considerable support with voter registration on campus in 2018.	Point Person(s) for each organization will be determined during VOiCE meetings. Create a list of potential organizations no later than the 10th week of the Spring 2025 semester. Finalize and contact 3-4 organizations to partner with by the end of the Spring 2025 semester.
Plan and create an annual programming calendar for each academic year that provides civic and democratic engagement programming in the months of September, October, November, February, March and April.	1. For the 2024 - 2025 academic year, plan out each monthly event at least one month in advance. 2. For future academic years, the majority of the planning can be done over summer breaks, with faculty resuming VOiCE work when they return on contract. 3. Publish the programming calendar on Compass and/or Canvas. Post student-specific events in Modern Campus Involve as well.	The creation of a programming calendar prior to each academic year will reduce the workload on members during the academic year and allow us to be more effective during meetings, as we will be simply talking about facilitation and/or implementation of the event and/or initiative. We will also be able to better forecast our needed resources and budgets for the following academic year.	VOiCE Co-Chairs All VOiCE Members 2024 - 2025 programming calendar created month-by-month. 2025 - 2026 programming calendar created during summer break 2025.
Partner with the Cornish Student Senate, the Cornish Inclusion Team, and the Cornish Black Student Union identify (1) opportunities for collaborative programming and (2) obstacles to student engagement in civic learning and activities.	1. Invite representatives from CSS, CIT and BSU to attend VOiCE meetings and/or have VOiCE representatives attend CSS, CIT, BSU meetings. 2. Review NSLVE data (if available) together and solicit feedback. 3. Establish strategy for regular collaboration.	As we do not currently have student members and we are uncertain the degree to which students will be involved in VOiCE this coming year, partnering with existing student organizations will allow us to easily include the student perspective for a variety of "student types" on campus.	VOiCE Co-Chairs First joint VOiCE/CSS, VOiCE/CIT and VOiCE/BSU meetings to occur before the end of Fall 2025. Review NSLVE data when available. Establish strategy for collaboration by the end of the Spring 2025 semester, in preparation for creating our 2025 - 2026 programming calendar.
Participate in the NSLVE to better understand student	1. Sign up as a participating campus with NSLVE.	Joining the NSLVE as a participating campus provides	Margaret Kirchner and Brian Harlan request to join NSLVE as

voting habits and create specific strategies for addressing gaps. In the event we are able to join the NSLVE prior to the 2024 election, our goal is to have 75% of Cornish students registered to vote and a voter turnout rate of 37% or higher for all students.	2. Receive the NSLVE campus report for Cornish College of the Arts. 3. Review the report, if available, with the VOiCE working group and discuss strengths and weaknesses. 4. Adjust our long-term goals accordingly.	us valuable insight into our students' voting habits that we would not otherwise have to plan, implement, and evaluate our initiatives and programs for increasing civic learning, democratic participation and voter engagement.	a participating campus through their website ASAP for 2024 analysis By the end of the Spring 2025 semester if we are unable to join for 2024.

Long Term Goals

In order to ensure the long-term success of VOiCE, we are advocating for civic learning, democratic participation, and voter engagement responsibilities to be integrated formally into job descriptions for VOiCE members, as appropriate. This goal has been listed and elaborated upon in both the "Succession Planning" section of "II. Leadership" and the "Short Term Goals" section of "V. Goals" and "VI. Strategies."

Ideally, a long-term future goal would be the creation of a staff position dedicated to conducting this work on campus and co-chairing VOiCE. This staff position could reasonably be a graduate assistant, if it is not possible to hire a part-time or full-time staff member within 10 years.

VII. Reporting

The impact of the work represented within this action plan will be shared with the campus community as a way to raise visibility to the college's voting and civic engagement efforts, as well as assisting the college in holding itself accountable for the goals established.

Visibility will be achieved by providing information resources on the campus intranet, Compass, acknowledgment of VOiCE efforts in new student, faculty, and staff orientations, and by ensuring that efforts are discussed in key shared governance committees. The resulting awareness will aid in attracting new interest to assist the sustainability of VOiCE efforts, and will also allow the campus community to monitor, celebrate, and inquire about progress.

VOiCE will be promoted on the college's public website and social media sites in support of the national movement to increase civic learning and engagement within higher education. Public information will also help to attract prospective students, staff, and faculty that share the college's democratic values. Data and best-practice sharing will also take place through external partners such as the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge and the National Study of Learning and Voter Engagement.

As the college's efforts mature to inspire action research among staff and faculty, conference presentations may be sought to promote these efforts further.

VIII. Evaluation

An assessment plan has been developed to allow the college to measure the progress and impact of VOiCE efforts. The action plan itself has undergone a self assessment using the ALL IN Democratic Engagement Rubric to verify alignment with best practices. Implementation of the action plan includes the ongoing collection, analysis, reporting and use of data to inform the work. These data will be available to the campus to support assessment for related efforts as well, and to provide a general description of campus climate and community experience. Data governance will be overseen by the director of institutional research & effectiveness within the provost's office and reported according to an annual timeline.

All VOiCE goals align with two goals in the college's 2024-2027 Strategic Plan under the pillar of institutional effectiveness:

- Infuse principles of equity & inclusion throughout the community; and
- Enhance organizational culture and employee satisfaction

 The process by which these goals will be undertaken, furthermore, will adhere with two other goals under the same pillar:

- Enhance data integrity, collection, analysis, understanding, and use; and
- Create communication plans to expand the visibility of policies, priorities, and accomplishments

Progress on the college's strategic plan is monitored by the college Strategic Evaluation Committee chaired by the director of institutional research and effectiveness. Each goal has been assigned an owner who is responsible for motivating and reporting work done toward the goal. Data is collected and inputted into a planning and self study software, and then reported to campus (including the board of trustees) twice a year.

Beyond the VOiCE goals, voter engagement will be tracked using the NSLV instrument. Campus climate, with respect to civil discourse and inclusive relations, will be monitored through published instruments every three years, and and through selected items on standardized course evaluations that are conducted every semester. A systematic audit will also be conducted to map existing curricular and co-curricular civic learning opportunities through courses and programs and presented to the college Curriculum Committee for consideration of further development. And finally, civic learning will be assessed in the first-year experience program and relevant Humanities & Scineces courses.

Item of Evaluation	Method	Owner	Timeline
VOiCE Goals	Collected and reported in alignment with the Strategic Plan	Kaitlyn Vallance, w/Margaret Kirchner	December 2024, May 2025
Voter registration and voting rates	Measured using the National Study of Civic Learning and Engagement	Brian Harlan, w/Margaret Kirchner	July 2025
Campus Climate	Selected course evaluation items by semester, and every three years with a national survey (e.g., HEDS Diversity and Equity survey)	Brian Harlan, w/Margaret Kirchner	February 2025, July 2025
Student Participation in VOiCE programming	Tracked through the college's Campus Engagement Platform	Kaitlyn Vallance, w/Brittany Henderson	July 2025
Learning Opportunities	Curriculum and co-curriculum mapping across campus	Brian Harlan	February 2025
Student Learning	Learning assessment conducted in IA150	Brian Harlan, w/James Falzone	July 2025