



# Delta College

## Democratic Engagement Action Plan 2020



Prepared by The Democracy Commitment Team at Delta College  
Lisa Lawrason, PhD, Co-Campus Coordinator  
Kimberly Klein, PhD, Co-Campus Coordinator

# I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*What is this action plan for and what does it seek to accomplish?*

Thomas Jefferson famously wrote to Charles Yancey in January 1816 that “If a nation expects to be ignorant and free in a state of civilization, it expects what never was and never will be.” If Thomas Jefferson is right, then the freedom to be enjoyed by today’s young adults in the future faces serious threats not from an external foe, but by their own political ignorance and disinterest. That today’s generations of young adults is less politically informed and engaged than that of previous generations is well documented by a growing body of research (see for example, Wattenberg 2010; Highton and Wolfinger 2001).

The purpose of The Democracy Commitment at Delta College is to raise awareness, educate and empower the Delta College community to enact positive change through social engagement and citizenship. The purpose of this action plan is to develop an intentional strategy to continue this work by engaging students in the 2020 election. Specifically, we will explore what’s possible in the online environment, as well as face-to-face, to prepare for the possibility of distance learning due to the Covid19 pandemic.

This commitment is based on a recognition that many students enter the doors of Delta College as mere members of their communities, not concerned with his/her role in addressing social problems. Some may come to us as well-intentioned volunteers but have worked to address problems in isolation of their social, political and economic context of the problems. Through both in-class and out-of-class civic encounters, The Democracy Commitment - and election 2020 engagement work - seeks to move students along the active citizen continuum (Hunt and Zompetti 2011) to becoming conscientious citizens who seek to discover root causes of issues or even active citizens, who make their community a priority in their values and life choices. Recognizing that no single course or experience will move students across the entire continuum, TDC at Delta College seeks to build civic engagement into the culture of the college by creating intentional civic encounters, both inside and outside the classroom.

While election years are the pinnacle of this work, empowering students to raise their voices and contribute to the public discourse beyond elections inspires them to further shape their communities. It recognizes that community college students have unique insights, energy and creativity that, left untapped, leaves a gaping hole in the decisions-making processes of our communities. Through a myriad of strategies, The Democracy Commitment at Delta College cultivates a sense of civic agency among students, including the knowledge, skills and motivation to become co-creators in the kind of community in which they live. As Ronan (2011) states, “civic learning actually engages all aspects of the human person – the *head*, through thinking, judging, deliberation, and advocacy, as well as through friendship with those co-involved in the public work; and the *hands* through voting, acts of service and collaborative political action” (5). By engaging all aspects of the human person, civic engagement efforts at

community colleges can help student realize their full potential to become co-creators in their communities and experience a sense of belonging. High voting rates will be a byproduct of this kind of culture, as students are invited to awaken to the reality that they are the ones they have been waiting for to make their world a better place.

Because America's community colleges serve some of the most disadvantaged and underrepresented populations in the United States, awakening our students to their civic potential makes possible a more fair, just and equitable representative democracy. The goal of this action plan is to create a culture that empowers students to engage their head, hands and heart in the 2020 election.

### ***Where will this action plan be implemented?***

Delta College is located in Bay County, Mich., in the heart of the Great Lakes Bay Region, about 13 miles from both Bay City and Saginaw. Its 7,819 students enrolled in the Fall 2019 semester include 1,557 who are enrolled in college for the first time; 3,610 returning students and 819 dual enrolled students. With regard to age, 40 percent of students are 19 years of age or under; about 31 percent are 20-24; about 12 percent are 25-29; and 15 percent are 30 or over. White students comprise about 76 percent of the study body, with black students at about 7 percent and Hispanic students at about 8 percent. Regarding gender, 58 percent of the student body is female; 42 percent male.

Delta College has no on-campus housing, making it a strictly commuter campus, which poses unique challenges to engagement. Other challenges include the high poverty rates and failing public school systems in surrounding communities, primarily Saginaw County, in which about 41 percent of Delta students live.

Despite these challenges, Delta College has become one of America's leading community colleges, with the Aspen Institute granting the college the Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence, an award granted to just 150 colleges in the country. The college has also become a national leader in civic engagement going back to 2011 when it became an original signatory to The Democracy Commitment (now Community Colleges 4 Democracy), a national organization of community colleges dedicated to preparing students for active citizenship. Since that time, the college has seen several students earn national recognition as civic leaders. The college itself has earned the gold seal from the All In Campus Democracy Challenge for its voter turnout rates in 2018, as well as a designation from Campus Vote Project as a voter-friendly campus. In 2018, Lisa Lawrason, one of the co-campus coordinators for The Democracy Commitment at Delta College was awarded the Daniel M. Asquino Civic Leadership Award by national The Democracy Commitment organization. The college's civic work has been featured numerous times at the Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement Meeting, as well as in publications such as Campus Compact's iStream and the Journal of Political Science Education. Forthcoming publications include AAC&U's Diversity and Democracy, as well as *Community Colleges for Democracy: Aligning Civic Engagement and Institutional Priorities* by Stylus Publishing.

The following voter engagement plan has been created on this foundation of excellence in civic learning and engagement. It will be implemented primarily by The Democracy Commitment Core Team at Delta College (membership listed under Leadership). It will kick off in summer 2020, with an emphasis on turnout for the November 2020 election.

## II. LEADERSHIP

As in any political organizing effort, people are the currency of changing the culture of a college to embrace civic empowerment. History has proven that effective leaders who can organize people united by a common conviction can shake the foundations of existing power structures, whether that structure be a city, state, nation or university. Movements start with individuals who refuse to accept the world is as it is and then organize others to create change. Those who seek to change a college culture must mobilize the resources and skills of “your people” and give them confidence that together you can make a difference. “Your people” are those who have a connection or interest in the work, such as those stakeholders identified above. Most community colleges don’t have large budgets to devote to civically empowering students, but leveraging the people who have overlapping interests in this work can overcome funding deficits.

Delta College political science professors Kimberly Klein and Lisa Lawrason became the co-campus coordinators of The Democracy Commitment at Delta College and began to build relationships and invite key stakeholders to join the work. In the eight years since, these stakeholders have formed the basis for The Democracy Commitment Core Team, whose purpose is to “raise awareness, educate, and empower the Delta College community to enact *positive change* through social engagement and citizenship.”

With Profs. Lawrason and Klein overseeing Delta’s work to increase civic learning and democratic engagement, they have assembled a coalition of stakeholders involved in the work in various ways. Members of The Democracy Commitment Core Team include individuals representing key offices across the campus. They are:

1. Kimberly Klein, Political Science Professor
2. Lisa Lawrason, Political Science Professor
3. Kathie Marchlewski, English Professor
4. Angela Guy-Lee, Sociology Professor
5. Christina Miller-Bellor, Sociology Professor
6. Audra Swarthout, Biology Professor
7. Maureen Donegan, Psychology Professor
8. Michelle While, Manager of Academic Career Experience and Service Learning
9. Michele Pratt, Library Director
10. Kristy Nelson, Director of Off-Campus Centers
11. Alison Ginter, Campus Life and Student Engagement Coordinator
12. Reva Curry, Vice President of Instruction/Learning Services

Depending on the focus of any given meeting, other relevant stakeholders are invited, including representatives from community organizations and county clerks. While they are not a permanent part of the team, their input is sought out and valued in the work.

Here is a list of the stakeholders each of these members represent, along with their connection to the work:

**Office of Student and Civic Engagement.** The Campus Life & Student Engagement Coordinator has become a valuable partner in this work of holistically engaging students. Because civic engagement is student engagement, the overlap of these interests multiplies the efforts of those who have an interest in seeing students plug into college life.

During election years, these overlapping interests are further multiplied to foster voter registration, education and engagement. In the 2018 midterm elections, Campus Life and Student Engagement offered voter registration, a Get-Out-The-Vote Party, and election Jeopardy (with prizes).

Also within the Office of Student and Civic Engagement, the manager for academic career experiences & service learning has become a valuable partner in this work. With the right kind of reflection questions, service learning can become civic engagement, and the overlap between the two has served to multiply efforts toward both. For example, this partnership has become integral in holding an annual event called Race To College, at which about 150 area fourth grade students from low-income schools come to campus; learn about bike safety; and experience hands-on learning in a college environment.

**Librarians.** As the information specialists on campus, librarians are key stakeholders in cultivating a politically informed student body. At Delta College, the library is the nucleus of activity for tutoring, computer access and information seeking. Keeping the library director in the loop of civic engagement activities has been crucial to civic awareness efforts, as key librarians have designed voter engagement displays, including plastering the windows in the library with “I Vote Because” cards and creating a voting booth display complete with sample ballots and instructions for finding one’s voting location.

**Diversity and Inclusion.** As effective democratic citizenship requires understanding and tolerating differences, this office has proven to be a valuable partner in co-sponsoring events. Every semester The Democracy Commitment holds The Human Library event, geared toward challenging stereotypes and understanding differences. Likewise, this partnership has brought speakers such as Inky Johnson to campus who not only empower students to complete their college goals but also to be the change they wish to see in the world. These events are geared, in part, toward inspiring first generation and lower income students, especially from minority communities, to persevere through college.

**Faculty across disciplines.** Civic engagement demonstrates to students that what they are learning in the classroom matters. Faculty who want to make a difference in the lives of students and challenge them to see the real-life relevance of the course material have found civic engagement to be an effective means for achieving that goal. Faculty teaching skill-based courses such as English and communication have found teaching these as citizenship skills – skills that can be used to affect a positive change – enhances the relevance of course material. Professors in biology, sociology and psychology have likewise found civic engagement valuable for demonstrating the applicability of course material. Faculty in these disciplines are an integral part of The Democracy Commitment Core Team.

**Sustainability.** Delta College is a leader in sustainability, and like civic engagement, campus leaders of this initiative are working to infuse it into disciplines across the college. Because civic engagement projects can be sustainability-related, this has generated overlapping interests between the two

initiatives. As such, the director of academic sustainability has become a valuable contributor to The Democracy Commitment Core Team.

**General Education.** With “Think Civically” as a general education requirement, civic engagement projects have become an important venue by which the college demonstrates learning of this outcome. The overlapping interests of the Think Civically general education resource group and the Democracy Commitment Core Team have proven a valuable means to advance civic empowerment of Delta students. In fact, many of its members serve on both committees, working to communicate the meaning of the general education outcome and how to assess it to faculty teaching courses in which students master this outcome.

**Citizens In Action Student Club.** This is a club that is dedicated to raising the voices of Delta students in the political process. Their efforts toward this end have involved a Meet The Candidates event, voter registration drives, We’ve All Got Issues campaigns, classroom presentations on voting and registration and more.

**Political Science Students.** Students enrolled in American Politics w/ Project are required to complete 15 hours of civic engagement. They are a valuable source of volunteers for voter registration and engagement efforts, as the time they spend on this work can count toward their required hours in the course.

**Delta College Political Forum Committee.** This is a committee comprised of faculty across the college who coordinate political forums and deliberative dialogues in the spring and fall of each year. In previous election years, this committee has organized deliberative dialogues relating to ballot issues such as legalization of marijuana. They have been an integral piece to students acquiring the political savvy to not only building political knowledge but also thinking skills necessary for engagement in public life.

**Administration.** The Delta College president, Vice President of Teaching and Learning, Dean of Teaching and Learning, the Dean of Enrollment and Dean of Students have all been incredibly supportive of this work in various ways. Primarily, these individuals are advocates for civic engagement on the college’s executive council, before the Board of Trustees and also advocate funding out of the Academics budget for this work.

**Community Partners.** Organizations including the American Association of University Women, NextGen and League of Women Voters have supported our voter registration efforts in the past, providing a critical army of volunteers to staff voter registration tables across campus. Additionally TurboVote, Campus Engagement Election Project, Campus Vote Project, and Community Colleges 4 Democracy (Campus Compact) have all supported these efforts in various ways such as providing voting guides, a voter registration website, text notifications to students, best practices and even legal advice.

### **Working Group**

A working group comprised of members from The Democracy Commitment Core Team will be primarily responsible for carrying out the election-engagement work. Tasks will be divvied up among this working group to move the campus toward the goal of engaging the head, heart and hands of every student in the 2020 election.

In 2018 this working group coordinated with county clerk's offices to identify best practices in voter registration efforts. Two weeks before the election, a local county clerk's office verified that everyone who had registered during our voting drives was, indeed, on the voting rolls for Election Day.

### **Retention Council.**

Because engaged students are more likely to persist through college, the work of civic learning and democratic engagement closely aligns with retention initiatives on campus. Like many institutions, Delta College has a strong focus on student retention and success. Delta College serves many disadvantaged, underprivileged students who not only are unprepared for college but also for citizenship. As such, empowering students with civic skills can work in tandem with demonstrating that their education can help them create changes they desperately want to see in their communities.

### **Plan for Succession**

The Democracy Commitment has many dedicated members, each of whom shoulder the responsibility for their own area of involvement. Should Lisa Lawrason and/or Kimberly Klein choose to step down, any number of our members who have been involved for years have been mentored to fill the void. Likewise, because Delta's promotion process for Full Professor requires demonstration of leadership, team members who are in a position to go up for Full could see this as a means of achieving that goal.

### III. COMMITMENT

As an original signatory institution to The Democracy Commitment, Delta College has demonstrated the priority it places on preparing students for democratic engagement. To back up its pledge, the college since 2011 has devoted between \$14,000 and \$15,000 each fiscal year out of the Academics budget to The Democracy Commitment. These funds not only support on-campus efforts but have allowed several students, faculty and staff to attend the annual Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement Meeting. With The Democracy Commitment merging into Campus Compact's Community Colleges 4 Democracy, the Delta delegation will now attend Campus Compact's national meeting, starting in 2020.

Starting in 2011, Delta College President Dr. Jean Goodnow commissioned The Democracy Commitment Core team, and this service to the college has been recognized in the promotion and tenure process of its members.

Delta College celebrates the work of civic learning and democratic engagement by touting the institution's civic accomplishments on its website, in press releases, newsletters, and in signage across campus. Leading up to the 2018 midterm election, engagement efforts were visible on signs from the time students walked in from the parking lot to heading into the Commons to entering the library. The campus was plastered with signs inviting students to get registered, informed and vote. Displays featuring student voices on "I Vote Because..." signs, as well as on The Democracy Wall on campus, sent the message loud and clear that voting is a trait of being a Delta College student. An e-mail was sent to the entire student body by the Vice President of Instruction and Learning Services, communicating the importance of voting and included a link to Delta's TurboVote site. Voter registration and election information is posted to the college's social media sites, including that of the library and student life. While we have attempted social media campaigns in the past, it is an area we would like to grow in 2020.

Additionally, an event called Change Your World Week that takes place at Delta every fall and winter semester is an important strategy for recognizing and celebrating students' civic work. During this event, as many as 100 student-designed issue advocacy campaigns line the main hallways of the college. In the fall 2018 semester, special emphasis was placed on how the results of the election could impact the issues students had identified. Demonstrating an institutional commitment to political empowerment, faculty across disciplines including english, communication, sociology, psychology, biology and political science got their students involved in the week-long event.

Lastly, the college's commitment to civic learning and democratic engagement is evident in both its general education and graduation requirements. In addition to a civic literacy course, both its AA and AS degrees require one-credit of civic engagement, comprised of 15 hours of civic work in their communities. This requirement demonstrates to the students that the college expects them to positively shape their community, empowering them with the knowledge, skills and motivation to do so. In a strong demonstration of institutional commitment to civic learning, the college has identified Think Civically as a general education outcome and has conducted one round of campus-wide assessment of this outcome.



# IV. LANDSCAPE

As demonstrated in Part III, Delta College has not only devoted financial resources to civic learning and democratic engagement of its students but has also infused this commitment into academics, both through a think civically general education outcome and a civic engagement graduation requirement.

This section will focus on assessment of those efforts, as well as current strategies to engage students, both inside and outside of the classroom.

### Pre and Posttest: American Politics with and without project

Delta College offers two American politics survey courses: POL105 requires 15 hours of civic engagement (to meet the graduation requirement); POL103 does not. With the outcomes and objectives for each course being identical, with the exception of the 15 hours of civic engagement in POL105, the two courses offer a natural experimental setting to measure the effects of the 15 hours of civic engagement on civic attitudes, political interest and likelihood of future participation. While each professor designs the civic engagement project in their course a little differently, students are asked to engage in their communities on issues of concern, identifying their interests and values and connecting them to an organization, party or candidate. They investigate root causes of issues, not just merely volunteering to serve the victims. The impact of these experiences is measured through the differences in a pre and posttest in POL105, then compared to differences from the pre and post test in POL103. When comparing the results of POL105 to POL103, we find that students who completed the civic engagement project demonstrated statistically significant (at the .05 level) greater growth in positive civic attitudes, political interest and likelihood of future political participation.

<b>Mean and Median for Pre and Post Political Interest Index, Comparing POL103 and POL105</b>				
<i>POL103 (without civic engagement project)</i>		<i>Pre Political Interest Index</i>	<i>Post Political Interest Index</i>	<i>Difference from Pre to Posttest</i>
	Mean	18.17	21.83	3.38
	Median	17.00	23.00	3.0
<i>POL105 (with civic engagement project)</i>		<i>Pre Political Interest Index</i>	<i>Post Political Interest Index</i>	<i>Difference from Pre to Posttest</i>
	Mean	18.07	24.95	6.60
	Median	18.00	25.00	7.00

## National Study of Learning, Voting and Engagement

Since 2012, Delta College has received campus-specific voter registration and turnout data through the National Study of Learning, Voting and Engagement. As was the case across the entire study, voter turnout among Delta College students went up in 2018, compared to the 2014 midterm elections. 2018 NSLVE data indicated a voter turnout rate of 40 percent at Delta College, with 66 percent of students registered.

Year	Registration Rate	Voting Rate of Registered Students	Overall Voting Rate of Student Body
2014	62.5 percent	35.9 percent	22.4 percent
2018	66 percent	60.6 percent	40 percent
CHANGE	+3.5 percent	+24.7 percent	+17.6 percent

Delta's 40 percent voter turnout rate in 2018 was slightly higher than other Associate institutions, as well as public and private institutions in the study.

Of particular interest in the college's NSLVE results were the following:

- The gap between the youngest and oldest student groups narrowed from 39 percent in 2014 to 29 percent 2018.
- Black students in both 2014 and 2018 turned out to vote in rates slightly higher than white students. In 2018, the black student turnout rate was 44.9 percent, compared with 39.9 percent for white students.
- More than 95 percent of the student body who voted did so in person on Election Day.

## Think Civically General Education Assessment

Delta College's Think Civically general education outcome is defined "demonstrate an understanding of diverse societies, ranging from local to global, in order to engage effectively in civic life." In 2017, 109 courses were designated M for "mastery" of this outcome. Within these courses, students who completed at least 45 credit hours (and are therefore "near graduation") were identified to assess the outcome campus-wide. In the winter 2017 semester, faculty teaching these classes were asked to submit randomly selected student work samples intended to assess the outcome. 66 samples of student work were submitted, 90 percent of which were scored at either the "developing" (meets minimal expectations) or "mastery" (shows proficiency) level.

## V. Goals

Since the inception of The Democracy Commitment at Delta College, our team had continued to ask ourselves, “When students walk the halls and sit in the classrooms at Delta College, do they get the sense that it is a place that invites them and empowers them to be agents for positive change?” We are continually reflecting on our efforts to create intentional civic encounters for students that raise awareness, educate and empower them to enact positive change through democratic engagement and citizenship. This constant reflection and evaluation has led to efforts to prepare to reach students online, should face-to-face interactions be limited due to the Covid19 pandemic. Recognizing that strategies we have employed in the past might not be possible in Fall 2020, we are exploring how to be truly transformative during this time. We are continuing to explore possibilities for carrying out the long-term vision of our work in the online environment. While we have made great strides in the last 8 years, we recognize there is more to be done, especially in creating an online community.

Applying Bernie Ronan’s (2011) Head, Hands and Heart framework to these endeavors centers our efforts on the knowledge, skills and motivations necessary for civic agency. All of these efforts build toward the ultimate goal of inviting every single Delta student to engage in the election, to foster full participation of the campus in the 2020 election.

### *Head*

Development of the intellect for citizenship builds students’ confidence to engage as citizens. Empirical research has demonstrated that political knowledge is a stronger predictor of political participation (Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996), as it reduces intimidation with the voting process and assures the individual that he/she is qualified for democratic decision-making. Indeed, what Ronan (2011) calls political “savvy” is necessary for moving students along the active citizen continuum, from being mere members of their societies to one who makes community engagement a priority in life choices. Ronan (2011) identifies the “traditional civics curriculum” as a starting point: Content on how government works, how elections are held, how legislation is passed, etc. Beyond the basis, political savvy is enhanced through dialogue and deliberation. Properly structured, dialogue and deliberation can teach students to think critically about issues and empathize with others by seeing an issue from their perspective.

To cultivate the necessary savvy for engaging students in the 2020 election, we propose these short-term goals:

1. Hold three “What’s On the Ballot” talks in the fall 2020 semester in which political science faculty present on one race or initiative students will be asked to vote on in the 2020 election. These talks will address both the issues, as well as the structural context of the race or initiative. They will be held both in-person and online through Zoom and Facebook Live.

2. Hold a deliberative dialogue event in the winter and fall 2020 semesters in which students will be invited to engage in an issue of concern in the 2020 election. It will be held both face-to-face and online through Facebook Live and Zoom.
3. Create an "Election Central" station at which students can access voting guides, sample ballots, website resources, etc. This will be held the week before the March 2020 primary and November 2020 election. Should tabling not be possible, this Election Central station will be held through the Library's website, with links shared on social media.
4. Hold an Absentee Ballot Voting Station Oct. 12 and 13 and 21 and 22. Should an online tabling effort not be possible, this will be transformed online through social media.
5. Create a library display featuring information about the election, as well as resources to get more informed. This will be created in advance of the fall 2020 semester and remain on display until the election.
6. Put yard signs at every main campus entrance reminding students of voter registration drives and deadlines, as well as upcoming the date for the upcoming election. The signs will include websites students can access for more information. They will be up during the fall 2020 voter registration drive, as well as two weeks in advance of the election.

### *Heart*

Community engagement can fulfill the human longing to belong to a political community. As quoted by Ronan, "politics is nothing more than a great project for encouraging civic friendship among members of society" (2011, 11). "(It) involves the discovery that what is good for others is also good for me. It enlarges my sense of what is good for me; the good of the other becomes my good too" (2011, 12). As such, we seek for our work to deepen the capacity of our students relating to diversity, equity and inclusion. While these values are ends in and of themselves, they also enlighten students' sense of civic responsibility and connectedness, creating a culture that invites participation. Discovering what is good for the community and bonding together around a common goal prompts citizens to take action together. In this way, the Democracy Commitment at Delta College will engage in actions to intentionally bring students together around the common goal of making their voices heard so their needs are not overlooked in the political process. To cultivate a sense of shared community, identify and future, we propose these short-term goals:

1. Hold The Human Library event in the winter and fall 2020 semesters. This event is designed to break down stereotypes and shatter prejudice, creating a sense of belonging for all groups on the campus of Delta College. If we are unable to meet face-to-face for this event, it will be held through Zoom.
2. Promote a "DeltaVotes!" message through a marketing campaign that emphasizes voting as a mark of a Delta College student. These messages will underscore the power students are giving up with they do not participate and the power they have to shape their shared future if they do.

3. Create a “I Vote Because...” display featuring the voices of Delta students and why they participate in elections. These cards will be exhibited in a prominent window in an effort to give students the opportunity to consider that others their age recognize the importance of participating and maybe they should, too. Should we not be able to meet face-to-face, we will hold this online through social media by creating a “wall” where students can tell us why they vote!
4. Hold a Meet The Candidates event in the fall 2020 semester in advance of the election. During this event, candidates for local and state races will be invited to campus to talk with students in the main hallways. This goal of this event is for students to feel personally invited to participate in the November election, creating a sense of belonging and shared voice in shaping the community. If we are unable to do this face-to-face, we will do it online through Zoom.
5. Engage social media through a hashtag campaign in the winter and fall 2020 semesters to create a sense of community around voting on Delta’s campus.
6. Hold a Get-Out-The-Vote party the day before and day of the November General Election to invite students to participate and cultivate their identity as voters. Again, this will be held online if we are unable to do it in person.

### *Hands*

Acquiring political savvy, a heart of belonging and a shared sense of fate ultimately culminates into taking action. As voting rights activist Fannie Lou Hamer in 1964 famously said, “You can pray until you faint but if you don’t get up and try to do something, God is not going to put it in your lap.” The act of coming together to create something that never existed before is only made possible when higher education institutions develop civic skills in students who will work together in their communities. As stated above, Delta College compels students to get out and do something by requiring one credit (15 hours) of civic engagement in the community. Students turn their political savvy into action in a variety of ways. We propose the following short-term goals to give students the opportunity to get out of the comfort of the private realm and engage in public action:

1. Hold a Change Your World Week in the winter 2020 and fall 2020 semesters. These weeklong events line the halls of the college with student-led and designed awareness campaigns of community issues, underscoring the importance of the political process on determining our shared fate and cultivating a shared concern on issues of mutual interest. To borrow from Aristotle (as discussed by Ronan (2011), this experience teaches students how to understand the common good of their community and their interdependence with it. This will be held online through student-designed social media pages if we are unable to do it in person.

2. Hold a “Race To College” event in the Fall 2020 semester in which Delta students are enlisted to teach at-risk elementary children about personal safety and engage in conversations with them about attending college.
3. Hold a State Lobbying Day, during which students can take a bus to Lansing to discuss issues of concern with state lawmakers, as well as sit in on committee hearings and House and Senate sessions. Students will meet with lawmakers over Zoom if we are unable to do this in person.
4. Provide students with opportunities to work on campaigns and with political parties, as well as work as election inspectors with local clerk’s offices.
5. Hold voter registration drives both in the winter and fall 2020 semesters, in partnership with local organizations but also enlisting students to implore their peers to register and vote. We will leverage our social media presence to promote voter registration if we are unable to do this in person.

### ***Measurement***

The above goals will be achieved if we accomplish the work in the semesters identified. However, we would also like to identify some numerical goals we believe this work will translate into:

1. Voter Turnout Rate of 55 percent on Delta’s campus. This would be up 6 percentage points from the 2016 voter turnout rate and set Delta at a level above other comparable institutions.
2. 200 new voter registrations and a voter registration rate of 70 percent campus wide. This would improve our 2018 registration rate of 66 percent.
3. Continue to close the gap in voting rates between our oldest and youngest student populations. In 2018, Delta’s youngest students actually turned out to vote in rates slightly higher than the next two age groups. This is significant because voting is a habitual act (Plutzer 2002), and if we engage students in the first election for which they are eligible, they are more likely to engage in subsequent elections. We hope to see our youngest students turn out to vote in rates 5 percentage points higher than the next age group.
4. 1,000 civic encounters in the fall 2020 semester. This includes students attending events, engaging at tables, registering to vote, etc.

### ***Long-Term Goals***

While Delta College has institutionalized civic learning and democratic engagement in ways so far described in this action plan, this work has yet to find its way into the college’s Strategic Plan. Long-term, it is our goal for The Democracy Commitment representatives to have a seat at the table when the college’s strategic plan is developed and to weave this work into the institutional priorities of the college identified in that plan.

Secondly, to further permeate the campus with the work of civically empowering our students, we identify the goal of developing a course for faculty on teaching civic engagement. This course would fit within our already existing EDU300 courses offered to faculty for the purpose of professional development. We have a goal of offering a course on teaching service learning and civic engagement in the Spring 2020 semester. It is our goal that this will result in civic engagement projects being designed and implemented in at least three additional disciplines.

## VI. STRATEGY

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>WHO IS RESPONSIBLE</b>	<b>WHERE WILL IT TAKE PLACE</b>	<b>WHEN WILL IT HAPPEN</b>	<b>WHAT IS ITS PURPOSE?</b>
Create a Delta Students “In The Know” social media presence	The Democracy Commitment, in conjunction with student success initiatives.	On Facebook, Instagram and Twitter	Before start of the fall 2020 semester	To create a coordinated space for reaching students online.
What’s on the Ballot talks	Political science faculty	N007 ALSO, online through Zoom or Facebook Live	September and October 2020	To cultivate savvy to participate in the election.
Deliberative dialogue event	Political Forum Committee	The Commons ALSO, online through Zoom or Facebook Life	April 2020 and October 2020	To cultivate civic skills for dialogue and deliberation, to foster a sense of belonging in the community.
Election Central Station	The Democracy Commitment Team	Main Hallway near E wing ALSO, through a voter engagement website developed by the library	Oct. 26-29 and Nov. 2 & 3	To provide resources and dismantle students’ intimidation with the voting process.
Election display in the library	Librarians	Delta College Library; or on the library website if unable to do in-person display.	September 2020 through Election Day	To provide students with information about the election, candidates, how to register and vote, sample ballots and more.
Election and Registration yard signs	The Democracy Commitment Team	Main entrances around campus	During voter registration drive Sept. 28-Oct. 1; Oct. 19-Nov. 3	To raise awareness about voter registration and the upcoming



				election and offer web resources.
The Human Library	English faculty Kathie Marchlewski, with librarians and TDC team	Founder's Hall OR through Zoom.	Tuesday, March 31 and Tuesday, Oct. 27	To break down stereotypes and create a sense of belonging.
DeltaVotes messaging	The Democracy Commitment team	Across campus AND on social media sites.	Fall 2020 semester	To invite students to participate in the election, creating a sense that their voice matters.
I Vote Because... display	Delta College librarians	Main window of library OR on social media page.	October 2020	To create a sense of voting identity for Delta students.
Meet The Candidates event	The Democracy Commitment team	East main hallway on campus OR through Zoom.	Mid-October 2020	To invite students to participate in the election and create a sense of shared fate in the outcome.
Social Media hashtag campaign	Democracy fellows	Online	October 2020	To foster a sense of community around voting.
Get out the vote party	Student engagement office	The Commons	Nov. 2 and 3	To invite students to participate and cultivate their identity as voters.
Change Your World Week	The Democracy Commitment team	East and west main hallways; OR through social media sites.	March 30-April 2 and Oct. 26-29	To cultivate a shared concern on issues of public interest and to empower students to take action.

Race To College	The Democracy Commitment team	Across campus	September 2020	To engage students in taking action on an issue of concern in their community.
State Lobbying Day	Lisa Lawrason	Lansing; OR through Zoom	March 25 and October 2020	To foster citizenship skills through engaging in dialogue with lawmakers.
Opportunities to work on campaign, with parties, as election inspectors	Political science faculty	Classrooms	Fall 2020 semester	Give students a venue for taking action.
Voter registration and absentee ballot drives	The Democracy Commitment team, in partnership with community organizations	Computer lab on campus; OR by promoting TurboVote through social media pages.	April 2020 and September 2020	To inform students about how to register, how to vote absentee, get them signed up for TurboVote and prepare them for Election Day.
Develop teaching service learning and civic engagement course for faculty	Lisa Lawrason and Lori Ziolkowski	Online and face to face	Spring 2020 semester	To spread civic engagement and service learning across the college so more students will have the opportunity to engage.
Offer to present on voter registration in classrooms, either in person or virtually.	Citizens In Action Student Club, The Democracy Commitment Team	Online or face-to-face in classrooms	Fall 2020 semester	To present the value of Delta students voting and the how-to information for

				voter registration.
Create a voter registration and GOTV video	Zach Z. and Lija W. (fellows with CVP and CEEP)	YouTube	Create in summer 2020, available for Fall 2020 semester	To make it easy for faculty to incorporate voter registration and GOTV content in their classes, either online or face-to-face
Incorporate political engagement in the college's strategic plan	Lisa Lawrason and Kimberly Klein		2020-2021	To formally tie the institutional goals into civic and democratic engagement.

## **VIII. REPORTING**

This Action Plan will be shared with all of the key stakeholders, identified under Leadership. It will be made available to all those whose work will contribute to putting these initiatives into action so they can see how their efforts fit into the bigger picture of the goals for this endeavor. Additionally, the plan will be shared with the Marketing office with the hope that it would be available on the college's website. It will also be sent to community partners who are coming alongside the college to support civic goals for its students. The college has already made its NSLVE data available publically, through the website and press releases sent to local media. The plan will be reviewed annually by The Democracy Commitment at Delta College.

## **IX. EVALUATION**

The work described in this plan will be evaluated annually according to the measures identified in the Part V on Goals. The campus climate this plan seeks to foster will continue to be assessed through the measures described under Part IV on Landscape. If the evaluation determines we are falling short of meeting the goals identified, adjustments to strategies will be made.

Records will be kept to determine how many students engage in events, social media campaigns, tabling, etc. We will do this by counting the number who engage, as well as distributing surveys at the events. Our Democracy Commitment team will debrief as a team throughout the fall, after each event, whether we are achieving our intended results, and adjust accordingly if necessary.

## **CONCLUSION**

The purpose behind this action plan is to help students realize their power as citizens. That power can only be realized when they possess the head, heart and hands for the work of citizenship. Their power will be demonstrated in their ability to “move forward, to get something done” (Ronan 2011). They will realize their potential to create something anew that will last long after they are gone. Only when institutions like Delta College help cultivate the head, hands and heart for citizenship will American society see a rebirth of freedom and a rediscovery of political power in its citizenry.

## Works Cited

Highton, Benjamin and Raymond Wolfinger. 2001. "The First Seven Years of the Political Life Cycle." *American Journal of Political Science* 45: 202-209

Hunt, S. and Zompetti, J. *Guide to Integrating Political Engagement through the Curriculum*. Presented at the American Democracy Project National Meeting in Orland, Fla. June 2-4, 2011.

Plutzer, Eric. 2002. "Becoming a Habitual Voter: Inertia, Resources and Growth in Young Adulthood" *American Political Science Review* 96:41-56

Ronan, Bernie. 2011. *The Civic Spectrum: How Students Become Engaged Citizens*. A study for the Kettering Foundation.

Wattenberg, Martin P. 2012. *Is Voting for Young People?* Boston: Pearson Education