



## ALL IN Challenge Action Plan 2022-2023

### *Delta State University's Plan to Increase Civic Learning, Political Engagement and Voting Rates*

#### *Executive Summary*

Delta State University is a public institution providing an all-inclusive learning experience to approximately 3,500 students that are enrolled in undergraduate and graduate programs. Knowing that the origin of the institution began with the fundamentals of a teacher's college, the University continues its success in teacher education while embracing the expansion of other traditional and unique fields of study. From the core disciplines such as arts, humanities, and sciences, to unique programs such as Commercial Aviation, the Delta Music Institute, and the nationally-recognized Geospatial Information Technology program, the University is committed to meeting the evolving needs of the students it serves.

Beginning this fall, this nonpartisan democratic engagement action plan that has been developed by Delta State University for the 2022-2023 school year will focus on local and future primary elections. The purpose of this action plan is to increase nonpartisan democratic engagement and student voter registration, education, and turnout on the upcoming voting dates. The goals for Delta State University for the next year's elections are: to help our students understand democracy on an applicable level and create healthy voting habits while utilizing the creativity of the traditional and unique fields of study.

The overall purpose of our plan is to continue the initial mission of Delta State University. Taking into consideration the teacher's college aspect, our efforts will model the education system as well as the unique core values of other fields of study that we have progressed into, in order to get our message across. We plan to educate, prepare, organize, cross collaborate and implement strategies that will get our students into the habit of voting locally so that we can increase the turnout for all Election Days to come.

The plan will be implemented in four phases:

- First, we will focus on a launch. In this phase, we will simply plant the image and idea around campus so that it becomes familiar.
- The second phase requires us to meet the students where they are. We will observe and collect data on their perception of politics. In this phase we find our "why" so that we can know how to approach the next stage.
- In phase three, we will provide educational tools in regards to important dates and more— in good company of simulated and encouraging realistic campus voting scenarios to help them understand the power of their vote.
- Lastly, the implementation phase will consist of getting them prepared to vote and getting them out to assist in the community. This stage requires action. It requires them to trust their voice and to follow through with their opinions that they have formed from the information they were presented with. We will learn from these four steps and repeat for the following year(s). The focus is to create awareness and help form healthy voting habits.

## ***The Landscape of Delta State University***

Delta State University is a public 4-year institution and joined the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge in 2022.

Delta State University prides itself on giving special attention to small classes, a friendly environment, and a broad liberal arts foundation. The University encourages student-faculty interactions in order to help shape and mold the next generations to come. With programs and services that promote intellectual, cultural, ethical, physical, and social development, students are able to expand their horizons and form their own opinions of the world.

This would be considered a primary asset to help advance the civic engagement on campus. Students from different cultural, socioeconomic, and ethnic backgrounds will be able to interact with each other and develop the ability to respect and value their peers' point of view. They will also be able to develop, assess, and express their own thoughts effectively by being able to analyze different perspectives. Nonetheless, they will be able to use the techniques of research and performance associated with their traditional and unique disciplines.

Another asset that Delta State University has in its collection is the growing ethnic diversity that is present. Although the institution is considered a PWI, Caucasian students have accounted for 50-60% of the student body from 2011-2021 while other ethnic races and multicultural students account for the remainder 40-50% — with African Americans accounting for 30-40% of that populace within that timeframe.

We feel that in order to create a world where decisions benefit everyone, we have to know what everyone needs. That representation matters and being vocal matters on this campus. We strive to help students understand real world views and understand that their voices are heard.

Presently, we are starting with zero voting data on our campus. This action plan will help us to create data by deriving a new system that will provide a foundation of our efforts to create informed voters now and to increase those numbers to come.

## ***Campus and Community Coalition***

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*Members (in alphabetical order):*

Jakyla Bohanna, President of the African American Student Council  
Harvey Ellington, Student Volunteer  
Lauryn Evans, Student Volunteer  
Anna Grace, Chief of Staff for the Student Government Association  
Ja’Kameon Hardiman, Student Volunteer  
Amare Harris, Media Coordinator for the Delta Proud Fellows  
Michelle Johansen, Coordinator for Diversity and Inclusion  
Kentaro Johnson, Coordinator of Delta Proud Youth Initiative  
Christina Knight, Coordinator for Student Affairs  
Elizabeth Collins Phelps, Student Success Center  
Taylor Turnage, Youth Civic Engagement Coordinator for Colleges and Universities for MS Votes

### **Strategies for Action**

Delta State University will implement these strategies to increase nonpartisan democratic engagement and student voter participation: Voter Registration tables, educational entertainment opportunities that helps students develop their “why” when choosing to vote, informational opportunities to help them form an opinion, and surveys to monitor voter interest, engagement and follow-through. Specialized social media engagement and informational booths will also be present for National Voter Registration Day, National Voter Education Week and Vote Early Day.

### **Success Goals:**

- Short-term
  - Collect data that provides a representation of our student interest pertaining to voting
  - Student voter demographic of at least 30% or more
- Long-term
  - Increase student voter demographic
  - Create a voting location on campus for students
  - Increase campus collaborations

### **Timeline:**

#### **2022**

November 1 – 8: Election Announcement and Reminders  
November 9 – Dec. 16: Promotion of the Introduction to the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge

#### **2023**

Jan 11: Q/A Day – What do you know? (Survey Day)  
February 8: Branches of Government (Survey Day)  
February 21: Townhall Meeting Simulation (Survey Day)  
March 6: Know the Candidates and their platforms (Local)  
March 29: Day in the Life of Political Figure  
April 10 – May 12: Random Political Mystery Debates (Survey Period and Data Generation)  
May 15 – Aug 11: Reminder of the ALL IN Challenge and plan the implementation phase  
August 7 – Dec 15: Get Active TBD: Register to Vote, Volunteer Activities to Register and assist at polls and etc.

**Evaluation:**

We will evaluate our action plan in the following ways: Utilizing survey tables to engage, inform and observe campus habits. We will follow up with students who participate in surveys in order to complete a focus group study.

Data will be forwarded to our Department of Institutional Research and the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE).

**Reporting:**

Our campus action plan will be posted on our campus page on ALL IN's website <https://allinchallenge.org/campuses/delta-state-university/>. Our institution has given ALL IN permission to publish our NSLVE reports which are posted on our campus page on ALL IN's website. Delta State University's Department of Institutional Research will also have access to the action plan and NSLVE reports. Semi-annual reports will be posted online for the Delta State community to access.