Germanna Community College
2024 Nonpartisan Democratic Engagement Action Plan

Developed by: Frank A. Cirioni, Ed.D., Dean of Student Development

Executive Summary:

Established in 1970 as part of the Virginia Community College System, Germanna Community College is a comprehensive community college providing quality, accessible, and affordable educational opportunities for the residents of the City of Fredericksburg and the counties of Caroline, Culpeper, King George, Madison, Orange, Spotsylvania, and Stafford and for online learners everywhere. Germanna is open to learners of all ages, races, backgrounds, and abilities. We're proud to serve over 12,000 students annually through associate degree and certificate programs, workforce credentials, and apprenticeships.

Named after the settlers who crossed the Rapidan River at Germanna Ford, Germanna Community College began its journey in 1969 when the Memorial Foundation of the Germanna Colonies donated land for its first campus in Locust Grove. Classes commenced in 1970, and over the years, the college expanded its reach, establishing the Fredericksburg Area Campus in 1997 and the Joseph R. Daniel Technology Center in Culpeper in 2006. Germanna's commitment to education continued through the Fredericksburg Center for Advanced Technology in 2017 and the Barbara J. Fried Center in Stafford County in 2018, solidifying its presence and impact throughout the region.

Germanna stands as a beacon of excellence in Virginia, consistently ranking among the top 150 community colleges in the nation by the Aspen Institute and earning recognition as a Military Friendly College. Its commitment to quality education is evident in its prestigious accreditations, held by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), the Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN), the Commission on Accreditation in Physical Therapy Education (CAPTE), the Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA), and the Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) Education Foundation. Furthermore, Germanna's dedication to cybersecurity is lauded by the National Security Agency (NSA) and the Department of Homeland Security, designating it as a National Center of Academic Excellence in Cyber Defense Education.

Germanna recognizes its responsibility to create, maintain, and nurture an academic and social environment that respects the diversity of people and ideas. The college is committed to being an inclusive community that respects all cultures, experiences, and abilities and that prepares individuals to thrive in a global society.

Germanna Community College champions civic engagement and voter empowerment, believing that informed and active citizens hold the power to shape their communities and nation. This commitment manifests through a multifaceted approach:

- **Education:** Germanna integrates civic education into its curriculum, fostering critical thinking and understanding of democratic processes. Students learn about their rights and responsibilities, equipping them to engage meaningfully in public discourse and policymaking.
- **Empowerment:** The college actively encourages voter registration and participation through initiatives like TurboVote and convenient on-campus voter registration drives. Regular workshops and presentations facilitated by Germanna faculty or nonpartisan community partners demystify the voting process and build confidence in exercising this fundamental right.
- **Engagement:** Germanna fosters a culture of civic engagement that transcends the ballot box. Students are encouraged to volunteer within their communities, participate in advocacy efforts, and hold elected office in the Student Government Association.
- **Peer-to-Peer:** Germanna recognizes the power of peer-to-peer support. By showcasing the impact of student activism and celebrating high voter turnout, the college encourages a culture of civic responsibility and inspires others to follow suit.

Germanna believes that an engaged citizenry is a cornerstone of a thriving society. By equipping students with the knowledge, confidence, and opportunities to actively participate, the college empowers students to become lifetime voters and impactful agents of change.

This nonpartisan democratic engagement action plan was developed by Germanna Community College for the 2024 United States presidential election. The purpose of this action plan is to increase nonpartisan democratic engagement and student voter registration, education, and turnout in the 2024 election.

Leadership:

Germanna Community College's leadership for civic engagement and voter empowerment is a collaborative force driven by dedicated individuals with diverse expertise. The team operates under a shared vision of empowering students to become active and informed citizens.

Key Players:

- **Dr. Janet Gullickson, President of Germanna Community College**

  Dr. Gullickson was appointed the first woman President of Germanna Community College, beginning July 1, 2017. Under her leadership, Germanna has grown in overall enrollment for the last four years by nearly 16%, with a 25% increase in African American enrollment, one of few community colleges in the country to grow. Germanna has been recognized twice as one of the top 150 colleges in the country by the Aspen Institute. The Aspen Institute, Johns Hopkins University, and the Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond have examined its best practices, and the college has been featured in several national publications and podcasts.

Dr. Gullickson holds a Doctor of Leadership and Policy in Higher Education degree from the University of Minnesota, a Master of Science degree in Rural Sociology, and Planning from South Dakota State University.

- **Dr. Tiffany Ray-Patterson, Vice President of Student Services and Equity Advancement, Chief Diversity Officer**

  Dr. Ray-Patterson joined Germanna Community College in 2018. In her role, she is responsible for providing leadership, executive level strategic vision, and administrative direction for initiatives related to marketing, increased student enrollment, completion, and overall student success operations. Dr. Ray-Patterson was selected by Old Dominion University's Alumni Association as part of their inaugural "40 under 40" class and named as part of Virginia Business Magazine's 2023 Women in Leadership cohort. She is an Aspen Institute College Excellence Program Rising Presidents Fellow.

  Dr. Ray-Patterson is a graduate of Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Virginia, where she majored in Business Administration. She holds a Master's degree in Business Administration and a Ph.D. in Higher Education from Old Dominion University.

- **Dr. Frank A. Cirioni, Dean of Student Development**

  Dr. Cirioni joined Germanna Community College in 2022. Dr. Cirioni created the *Civic Engagement & Voter Empowerment* program and chairs the campuswide workgroup. Under his leadership, Dr. Cirioni led Germanna to join the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge | Civic Nation, Civic Learning for an Engaged Democracy Coalition, Campus Compact, Campus Vote Project, National Voter Registration Day, National Voter Education Week, Vote Early Day, and The Students Learn Students Vote Coalition. Dr. Cirioni serves as the campus lead for the *TurboVote Engaged Community College (TECC) Program* and the technical lead of the TurboVote platform. Dr. Cirioni has 17 years of experience in Student Affairs and expertise in student conduct, Title IX, restorative justice, and social justice education.

  Dr. Cirioni holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Visual Arts Education from New York Institute of Technology, a Master of Arts degree in College Student Personnel from Bowling Green State University, and a Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) degree in Educational Leadership from California State University, Long Beach.

- **Mark Haines, Assistant Dean of Student Development and Title IX Coordinator**

  Mark Haines has served Germanna Community College for 23 years. Starting in 2000 as the Coordinator of Disability Services, Mr. Haines transitioned to the role of Coordinator of Counseling Services for Germanna's Fredericksburg Area Campus in 2008. He was later promoted to the role of Assistant Dean of Student Development in 2014. Mr. Haines has provided oversight to the areas of Disability Services, Counseling Services, Academic Advising, Dual Enrollment, Student Activities, and Germanna's College Success courses, SDV 100. He has served in the role of Title IX Coordinator since 2013.

  Mr. Haines holds a Bachelor of Liberal Studies from Bowling Green State University and an M.Ed. in Rehabilitation Counseling from the University of Georgia.

- **Dr. Sarah W. Somerville, Assistant Dean of Student Development, Deputy Title IX Coordinator, and Professor**

  Dr. Somerville has served Germanna Community College for over 40 years. Dr. Somerville oversees Counseling Services for the College, and her department serves as a key component of retention for Germanna. Under Counseling Services, the department coordinates the institution's Germanna Cares initiative. Germanna Cares focuses on reducing barriers related to life resource insecurities which can get in the way of student retention and success. Sarah also serves as the Deputy Title IX Coordinator, which leads the College's commitment to supporting an environment which reduces and eliminates discrimination based on sex and gender.

  Dr. Somerville holds a bachelor's degree from Westhampton College of University of Richmond, a Master's degree of Education in Counselor Education with a specialty in Higher Education at University of Virginia, and a Doctor of Education in Adult Education and Community College Leadership from North Carolina State University.

- **Dr. Jamie Lennahan, Associate Professor of Political Science**

  In 2023, Dr. Lennahan was one of only two national winners of the *[Standout Faculty Member Award](#)* from ALL IN, a nonpartisan group that engages 977 educational institutions and encourages them to promote active and informed citizenship and make voting a core value on campus.

- **Dr. Eric Vanover, Associate Professor of History and Chair, Social Sciences**

  Dr. Vanover earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in History from the University of Virginia's College at Wise, a Master of Arts degree in History from Virginia Tech, and a PhD from Old Dominion University. His master's research centered on concepts of civic identity and nationalism during the American Civil War, and his doctoral research focused on civic engagement in general education at community colleges. Dr. Vanover published "[The Case for Civic Learning in the Humanities at Community Colleges](#)" in Peer Review in 2018.

  Dr. Vanover served on the Virginia Community College System General Education Taskforce charged with establishing civic engagement as one of six systemwide core competencies of general education. In his history courses, Dr. Vanover encourages students not only to ask questions, but to become involved in providing the answers, to put their stamp on the knowledge they gain in the classroom, and to use that knowledge to be informed, engaged citizens in our democratic society.

- **Samantha Sharkey, Academic Advisor**

- **Elizabeth "Lizzie" Morrison, Interim Student Life & Leadership Specialist**

- *Vacant,* **Coordinator of Student Life & Leadership**

- **Jaleesa Hayes, Career & Transfer Center Assistant**

- **Dante' Braden '23, Germanna Alumnus**

- **[Riley Wallace '23](#), Germanna Alumnus**

- **Office of Student Life & Leadership:** Advises the Student Government Association (SGA) and oversees all student clubs and organizations. This team organizes voter registration drives, workshops, forums, and other events that raise awareness and encourage participation.

- **Student Government Association:** This student-led organization plays a crucial role in mobilizing peers, advocating for student voting rights, and organizing civic engagement initiatives.

- **Center for Teaching & Learning:** The center works with faculty to integrate civic education into the curriculum, fostering critical thinking and understanding of democratic processes.

- **Library:** The library provides resources and support for students researching election information and political issues.

Collaboration and Partnerships:

The leadership team recognizes the power of collaboration and actively builds partnerships with:

- **Local election officials:** Collaborating on voter registration drives, voter education workshops, and serving as Polling Places for the counties in our service area.

- **Community organizations:** Partnering with nonpartisan organizations, including the NAACP and Women League of Voters, focused on voter education and civic engagement.

- **National organizations:** Partnering with nonpartisan organizations, including ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge | Civic Nation, Civic Learning for an Engaged Democracy Coalition, Campus Compact, Campus Vote Project, and The Students Learn Students Vote Coalition to host *National Civic Holidays*, including but not limited to National Voter Registration Day, National Voter Education Week, Vote Early Day, and Election Hero Day.

- **Faculty, Staff, and Student Leaders:** Engaging faculty, staff, and student leaders as mentors, volunteers, and resources for student civic engagement efforts.

Commitment:

Mission
As a public, comprehensive community college, Germanna provides accessible, high quality educational and training opportunities that address our communities' diverse and changing learning needs.

Vision
Germanna Community College is recognized as the region's leader and preferred partner for providing excellence in accessible educational opportunities and related services to our communities. Our quality learning experiences enable students to participate effectively in the

social, economic, political, intellectual, and cultural life of their communities. Germanna, a dynamic learning organization, is the premier gateway to personal and community development.

Values
Our values influence our thoughts, guide our decisions, mold our policies, and help determine our course of action. Student learning and success are at the heart of all that we do and are demonstrated by:

- ✓ Passion for learning and teaching
- ✓ Integrity
- ✓ Culture of service
- ✓ Excellence
- ✓ Professionalism
- ✓ Stewardship
- ✓ Respect

Civic Engagement in the Curriculum
Civic Engagement Learning Outcomes build on the foundational concepts of civic engagement introduced in Student Development courses (SDV 100):

1.2 Explain the main attributes of democracy and the American political system.

1.3 Describe the basic activities of democratic citizenship in both political and non-political contexts.

1.4 Engage in discussion and debate with those holding differing views and identities; and understand the value of debate in sustaining civil society and democracy.

SDV 100 Civic Engagement Module
Germanna's SDV 100 Canvas module explores five concepts of civic engagement:
- Identity
- Democracy
- Citizenship
- Discourse
- Service

The module includes a video, quiz, reflective writing assignment, and resources organized by concept:

Identity
- ➢ *Who We Are* explains Germanna's history, mission, vision, and values.
- ➢ *Black Minds Matter* details Germanna's plan to be an anti-racist institution.

Democracy
- ➢ *Administration* introduces you to our president and vice presidents.
- ➢ *Academic Deans* introduces you to the leaders of the different academic groups.
- ➢ *Shared Governance Policy* articulates how government is shared at Germanna.

Citizenship
- ➢ *The Grizz* is a one-stop shop for student life and leadership.
- ➢ *Student Development* also hosts many events were students can get involved.

Discourse

➢ Make sure your're familiar with the college expectations. Have you read the Student Handbook? The Student Expressive Activity Policy details your rights to express yourself.

Service
➢ Join a club! The list of student clubs and organizations is available on *The Grizz.*

Writing Prompt
Which of the five concepts of civic engagement will be easiest for you to practice as a Germanna student? Which will challenge you most?

Student Response: "The concept of integrity will be the easiest concept for me to apply. I believe that being honest is an important characteristic to have and hone, and being able to hold yourself accountable for your academic actions is a vital part of being a good student."

Student Response: "The most challenging concept for me will be discourse; we all have different perspectives, ideas, and views about life… and sometimes it becomes a bit more difficult to accept people's opinions or ideas."

Formally Embedded Assessment
Over 2,000 students were formally assessed during Academic Year 2022-2023 across the following courses:

- PLS 135: U.S. Government and Politics
- HIS 101 & HIS 102: History of Western Civilization I & II
- HIS 121 & HIS 122: United States History I & II
- PHI 100: Introduction to Philosophy

Civic Engagement is for Everyone
Opportunities to practice civic engagement outside of the classroom are extended to all students through co-curricular experiences:

1.5 Use co-curricular experiences or knowledge gained from an academic discipline to identify and respond to issues impacting the well-being of local, national, or global communities.

TurboVote Platform
Germanna Community College is **the first Virginia Community College** to use the TurboVote platform. Germanna is a member of the *TurboVote Engaged Community College* (TECC) Program. TECC provides eligible institutions the opportunity to become TurboVote partner campuses and receive additional support over several academic years, with **the aim of increasing student voter turnout.**

With TurboVote, Germanna students, faculty, and staff can:
- Register to Vote.
- Check their Registration.
- Pledge to Register.
- Sign Up for Election Reminders.
- Make a Plan to Vote (By Mail, Early, or In Person).

ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge

Germanna Community College is an active participant in the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge. Germanna received the following recognition from ALL IN:

President Janet Gullickson is a current signatory to the ALL IN Presidents' Commitment to Full Student Voter Participation most recently signing the commitment in 2022.

Campus Polling Places

Germanna Community College serves as a Polling Place for two counties in our service area:

1. Orange County, District 4 East: Locust Grove Campus
   2130 Germanna Highway, Locust Grove, VA 22508

2. Spotsylvania County, Lee Hill District: Fredericksburg Area Campus
   10000 Germanna Point Drive, Fredericksburg, VA 22408

Landscape:

Virginia's election laws aim to ensure fair and accessible elections for all eligible voters. Here's a breakdown of key laws impacting voter registration, ID requirements, vote-by-mail processes, and absentee ballot request timelines:

Voter Registration Eligibility:

- Be a resident of Virginia (a person who has come to Virginia for temporary purposes and intends to return to another state is not considered a resident for voting purposes).
- Be a U.S. Citizen.
- Be 18 years old (any person who is 17 years old and will be eighteen years of age at the next general election shall be permitted to register in advance and vote in any intervening primary or special election).
- Not be registered and plan to vote in another state.
- Not currently declared mentally incompetent by a court of law.
- If convicted of a felony, your right to vote must have been restored.

Voter Registration Deadlines:

- General: 22 Days before election
- Primary: 22 Days before election

- ➢ Special: 14 Days before election
- ➢ Special (Called by the Governor): 7 Days before election

Voter Registration Methods:

- Online Registration
- Local voter registration office
- Download a PDF copy of the registration form
    - o Available en Español, tiếng Việt, and 한 국어
- State or local government offices when applying or re-certifying for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), SNAP, WIC, Medicaid, or Rehabilitation Services.
- Government offices in the Commonwealth that provide State-funded programs primarily engaged in providing services to person with disabilities.
- Armed forces recruitment offices
- Public libraries
- Virginia Department of Elections office
- Department of Motor Vehicles offices
- Voter Registration Drives

How do College Students register to vote in Virginia?

A college student registers to vote in Virginia the same as any other applicant: every prospective voter must submit a voter registration application. Every voter in Virginia must submit their residential address when registering to vote (a post office box cannot serve as a residential address). A dormitory or college address can be an acceptable residential address and does not disqualify you from voting.

Voter ID:

Voters may provide either an acceptable form of ID or sign an ID Confirmation Statement at the polls. A Virginia DMV license may be used at any time. Virginia law permits an expired DMV license to be used for voting purposes. If you get to your polling place without acceptable ID, you can sign an ID statement affirming your identity, you will be able to vote on a regular ballot. If you do not sign an ID statement to affirm your identity, you may vote on a provisional ballot. You will be provided instructions to ensure your vote will count.

Absentee Voting

Absentee voting is available in Virginia, and no reason is required. The last day to request an absentee ballot is by 5pm 11 days before an election. Your marked absentee ballot must be postmarked by Election Day and received by noon three days after the election to be counted. It can also be returned in person to your local registrar's office or to a secure ballot drop box by 7pm on Election Day.

Early Voting In-Person

In Virginia, you can vote early at your local registrar's office beginning 45 days before Election Day and ending the Saturday before Election Day. You do not have to have a reason or fill out an application to vote early. Accessible equipment and/or curbside voting is available upon request.

Upcoming Elections in Virginia

- March 5, 2024: Presidential Primary Election
  First day of in-person early voting at your local registrar's office: January 19, 2024.

- June 18, 2024: Primary Elections
  First day of in-person early voting at your local registrar's office: May 3, 2024.

- November 5, 2024: General and Special Elections
  First day of in-person early voting at your local registrar's office: September 20, 2024.

ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge:

Germanna Community College is a public community college and joined the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge in 2022. Germanna is designated as a Predominantly White Institution and a Rural Serving Institution.

Campus Demographics and Voting Data:

As of December 15, 2023, Germanna Community College is still waiting for the 2022 NSLVE data and we will update this action plan accordingly once the data set is received. Based on the 2020 NSLVE Report:

Germanna Community College has 7,679 students.

Germanna Community College has authorized the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) and will receive campus voting data for the 2022 election in fall 2023. Our NSLVE authorization runs through 2033.

Our 2020 campus registration rate was **81.3%.**
Our 2020 campus voting rate of registered students was **83.1%.**
Our 2020 campus voting rate was **67.5%.**

Our 2018 campus registration rate was 72.9%.
Our 2018 campus voting rate of registered students was 63.1%.
Our 2018 campus voting rate was 46%.

Our 2014 campus registration rate was 59.8%.
Our 2014 campus voting rate of registered students was 35.1%.
Our 2014 campus voting rate was 21%.

In 2018, the voting rate for all institutions was **39.1%.**

Germanna Community College has been recognized by ALL IN with the following seals of recognition for past elections: 2018 Gold, 2020 Silver.

Germanna Community College's nonpartisan democratic engagement goals are:

Short-Term Goals (Spring 2024):

- **Increase voter registration rate by 15 percentage points:**
    - Implement TurboVote registration at new student orientation, *Germanna Welcome Day,* Welcome Week activities, and throughout the semester.
    - Partner with nonpartisan community organizations and student clubs to host voter registration drives with incentives (e.g., raffles, giveaways).
    - Utilize social media and campus channels to promote registration deadlines and share resources.

- **Boost voter education and literacy:**
    - Integrate nonpartisan voter education workshops into existing curriculum or offer them as stand-alone events.
    - Partner with local election officials to host voter information sessions.
    - Create online resources and guides on voting procedures, candidate platforms, and key issues.

- **Foster a culture of civic engagement:**
    - Organize campus town halls and/or forums featuring faculty, local experts, and candidates to discuss important issues.
    - Encourage students to volunteer with local campaigns or community organizations.
    - Highlight the impact of student activism and civic participation through testimonials and success stories.

Long-Term Goals (Summer 2024, Fall 2024, and beyond):

- **Achieve 90% Voting Rate among registered students:**
    - Develop a data-informed strategy to identify and target unregistered or low-propensity voters.
    - Implement peer-to-peer outreach programs where students encourage and motivate each other to vote.
    - Partner with local businesses and organizations to offer voting incentives and transportation assistance.

- **Become a model for civic engagement in Virginia:**
    - Share best practices and resources with other colleges and universities in the Commonwealth.

- Collaborate with local and state election officials to improve accessibility and streamline voting processes.
- Advocate for policies that encourage student voter participation.

By implementing these goals, Germanna Community College can become a leader in student voter engagement and empower its students to actively participate in shaping their future.

Strategy:

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

1. Prioritize Accessibility and Convenience:

- Integrate TurboVote into new student orientation and online portals.
- Host ongoing voter registration drives in convenient locations on-campus.
- Offer online voter registration workshops and resources.
- Partner with local transportation providers to offer discounted or free rides to polling places on Election Day.
- Promote early voting options and absentee ballot applications.

2. Enhance Voter Education and Literacy:

- Develop nonpartisan, interactive workshops on voting procedures, candidate platforms, and key issues.
- Partner with local election officials to host candidate forums and voter information sessions.
- Create online guides and social media campaigns to demystify the voting process.
- Invite guest speakers from diverse backgrounds to discuss relevant political topics.
- Offer faculty development opportunities on integrating civic education into their curriculum.

3. Foster a Culture of Civic Engagement:

- Organize debate watch parties and campus forums featuring local candidates or experts on relevant issues.
- Promote volunteer opportunities with local campaigns and community organizations.
- Celebrate student activism and civic participation through testimonials and success stories.

- Partner with student organizations and clubs to host nonpartisan voter education and engagement events.
- Utilize social media and campus channels to share resources, news, and inspiring stories about civic engagement.

4. Leverage Peer-to-Peer Outreach:

- Train student volunteers to conduct peer-to-peer voter registration and education campaigns.
- Establish a "Get Out the Vote" buddy system where students encourage each other to register and vote.
- Organize social media challenges and contests to incentivize voter registration and participation.
- Highlight the power of student voices and the impact of their voting decisions.

5. Partner and Collaborate:

- Build partnerships with local election officials, community organizations, and non-partisan voter education groups.
- Collaborate with other community colleges and local universities to share best practices and resources.
- Connect with national civic engagement initiatives focused on student voting.
- Advocate for policies that promote student voter participation at the state and national level.

6. Utilize Data and Feedback:

- Track key metrics like voter registration and turnout rates to measure progress and identify areas for improvement.
- Conduct regular surveys and focus groups to understand student needs and preferences regarding civic engagement.
- Utilize data to inform future strategies and ensure resources are allocated effectively.

7. Celebrate Success and Maintain Momentum:

- Recognize and celebrate student leaders, faculty champions, and volunteers who contribute to civic engagement efforts.
- Share the college's achievements in voter registration and turnout to generate campus-wide pride and inspire continued participation.
- Maintain a consistent focus on civic engagement throughout the year, not just during election season.

By implementing these strategies and adapting them to the unique needs of Germanna Community College, the college can create a thriving culture of nonpartisan democratic engagement and empower its students to become informed, active, and engaged citizens who contribute to a stronger community and nation.

Evaluation:

We will evaluate our action plan in the following ways:

Germanna Community College will use the National, Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) to evaluate the increase of student voting by comparing our campus voter turnout and voter registration rates to past elections to measure progress on increasing both.

Reporting:

Our campus action plan will be posted on our [Germanna VOTES](#) webpage on ALL IN's website https://allinchallenge.org/campuses/germanna-community-college/.

Our institution has given ALL IN permission to publish our past NSLVE reports, which can also be found on our campus page above.