



Gettysburg College 2022 Democratic Engagement Action Plan

Developed by: Jeffrey Rioux

Executive Summary:

This nonpartisan democratic engagement action plan was developed by the Voting Registration and Turnout Working Group at Gettysburg College in Pennsylvania for the 2022 election. The purpose of this action plan is to increase nonpartisan democratic engagement and student voter registration, education, and turnout in the 2022 midterm election. The goals for Gettysburg College for the 2022 election are:

- Increase voter registration rate to 92% of eligible voters.
- Increase voter turnout rate to 81% of registered voters.

Leadership:

Our leadership team includes student and employee representatives from the Center for Public Service (CPS), the Eisenhower Institute (EI), the Pi Sigma Alpha Honor Society, and students from the course POL 201: Race and the Right to Vote:

Anna Benson (CPS – co-leader of working group)
Riley Meyers (student in POL 201 – Race and the Right to Vote; co-leader of working group)
Nicole Cesanek (CPS)
Alicia Patterson (CPS)
Cittlali Martinez Gonzalez (CPS)
Samantha Karns (CPS)
Jasmin Herrera (Pi Sigma Alpha Honor Society)
Anthony Choi (Pi Sigma Alpha Honor Society)
Carter Hanson (EI)
Lauren Cole (Program Manager, EI)
Lindsay Reid (Professor of Political Science and advisor to PSA)
Kerry Ellis (student in POL 201)
Lucy Britt (professor – POL 201)
Jeff Rioux (Director of CPS – secretary of working group)

Commitment:

Gettysburg College has been a signatory to the Higher Education Presidents' Commitment to Full Student Voter Participation since 2020.

The first Voter Registration Working Group formed for the presidential election in 2020, and set stretch goals of 70% voter turnout rate. Despite working with limited on-campus participation due to COVID, we surpassed that voter turnout rate by having 80% of eligible voters vote in 2020.

Landscape:

Gettysburg College is a private 4-year institution adjacent to the Gettysburg National Military Park, the site of the turning point in the battle to end slavery and the location of Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address. The College has a strong tradition of civic engagement. The Center for Public Service connects students and faculty with community-based work to foster social change. In 2013, CPS was the Presidential Awardee of the President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll. The College also houses the Eisenhower Institute, which connects aspiring young leaders with public policy experts to discover their passion and tackle society's most challenging issues. These two centers teamed with students and faculty from the Political Science department to work together to increase voter registration and turnout.

Gettysburg College joined the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge in 2020.

Our campus demographic and voting data:

Gettysburg College has 2,378 students.

- 52% female; 48% male
- 22% domestic students of color
- 7.8% international students (representing 50 countries/territories)
- 73% are out-of-state domestic students (representing 40 states)
- 21% Pell Grant recipients

Gettysburg College has authorized NSLVE.

Our institution had a 2020 campus voting rate of 79.6%.

Our institution had a 2020 voter registration rate of 91.4%.

Our institution had a 2018 voter turnout rate of 36%.

Our institution had a 2018 voter registration rate of 80.6%.

Our institution has been recognized by ALL IN with the following seals: 2018 Silver, 2020 Platinum

Goals:

Our campus democratic engagement goals are:

For the 2022 midterm election, our goals were:

- Increase student voter registration rate from 91% (2020) to 92%
- Increase student voter turnout rate from 80% (2020) to 81%
- To beat Dickinson College in both of these categories
- To establish a working group this fall that can build on its activities and lessons learned so that the work can continue in future years.

Strategy:

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

Social Media

An Instagram account called Gettysburg Votes was created to push information about events and how to register and how to vote. No date was used for the account (e.g. Gburg Votes 2022) so that we can utilize the account each election cycle.

National Voter Registration Day

As part of Democracy Week, EI sponsored events to promote National Voter Registration Day. There were tables in the Athletics building to get student athletes to register to vote while they waited for their Picture Day photos. In addition, voter registration tables were held in the College Union Building from the afternoon into the evening. The working group supported the event by purchasing a "I'm Just a Bill" costume to create a spectacle that made it hard for students not to stop and see what was going on. The President of the college also came to the event. Students filled out "I vote because..." cards and responses were photographed and posted on social media.

Competition

We advertised three competitions (one for athletic teams, one for Greek organizations, one for residence halls) to see which group could have the highest voter registration rate. We left the reporting up to the Honor Code and recognized the winners on our social media account.

Voter Registration Tables

We were constantly having tables at events, such as the two debates that were held on campus. At one event, donuts were given away by a food truck (to anyone who came - not as an incentive to register), and the "I'm Just a Bill" was there encouraging registrations and handing out donuts. Photos taken with "Bill" were posted with hashtags to spread information and excitement about the election. Donuts were funded by a grant received by Pi Sigma Alpha.

Email to Local Voters

Because the local courthouse has public records of all those who register to vote using the college as their home address, we were able to secure the 412 names of students registered locally. We sent an email to them the day before the election reminding them of their polling station location (on campus), the hours, and the requirement to bring an ID if they were voting here for the first time. Non-partisan voter guides were also included.

Working Group

The working group met weekly from the beginning of September until election day. While the working group formed organically, we know that forming organically over the month of September meant that we were constantly revising our plan for the first month. Desiring to build on what we have learned, we plan next year to have our plan in place before the school year starts and hit the ground running on September 1.

Evaluation:

We will evaluate our action plan in the following ways:

Debrief Meeting with Working Group

We will convene the working group in November to debrief our efforts with a critical eye, making detailed notes and recommendations for the next election cycle. For each of our strategies, we will assess how effective we believe they were, and prioritize our time appropriately in the future.

NSLVE Data

When the NSLVE data is available in fall 2023, we will convene to discuss our results, and hopefully celebrate.

Working Group Continued

When the working group is ready to prepare our next action plan (in advance of the fall semester) we will read the best action plans available on the All In website and STEAL THE BEST IDEAS!!!

Reporting:

Our campus action plan will be posted on our campus page on ALL IN's website

<https://allinchallenge.org/campuses/gettysburg-college/>.

Our institution has given ALL IN permission to publish our NSLVE reports which are posted on our campus page on ALL IN's website.