



# *Midterms Matter: Hamline Votes 2022*

*Hamline Votes Action Plan*

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## Hamline Votes 2022 Committee

- 1) Nur Mood, Assistant Director of Social Justice Programs
- 2) Jane Krentz, Director McVay Youth Partnership
- 3) Chaplain Kelly Figueroa-Ray, Director of the Wesley Center
- 4) John Shepard, Assistant Director, Center for Global Environmental Education; Associate Professor, School of Education
- 5) Caroline Hilk, Assistant Provost, Academic Affairs
- 6) Raina Meyer and Ruben Dominguez, Student Congress Co-Presidents
- 7) Jim Scheibel, Former Mayor of St. Paul and Professor of Practice, Hamline School of Business
- 8) Karen Heggernes: Athletics Department Representative, Head Lacrosse Coach

# Summary

## Background

Hamline University takes the lead in civic engagement by prioritizing the goal of increasing voter participation as a prime institutional concern. In the past decade, the Hamline student voting rates have increased in every election. We took the national lead for all 4-year, private colleges in 2018 Midterm Elections with 63.3% student voter turnout, and we intend to improve that lead by a greater margin through the following plan. Our goal will be 72% turnout for the 2022 Midterm Elections and our slogan “Midterms Matter: Hamline Votes 2022” will be targeted at educating students about the importance of turning out for midterm elections, which historically have much lower turnout rates across the nation.

## Approach

Hamline Votes is a committee made up of students, faculty and staff that organizes student engagement around elections. Hamline Votes members include assistant provost Caroline Hilke; faculty members: Jim Schiebel and John Shepard; staff members: Nur Mood, Jane Krentz, Chaplain Kelly Figueroa-Ray, and Karen Heggernes; and student leaders from Hamline University Student Congress: Raina Meyer and Ruben Dominguez. This team continues in a campaign approach to raise awareness about the importance of voting and to motivate engagement on campus that was developed using behavior change strategies.

**We have set a clear, compelling goal:** Building off of taking the lead nationally in 2018 with a 63.3% voter turnout in midterm elections, our Hamline Votes goal is 72% in the 2022 Midterm Elections. This goal will be communicated widely in Spring 2022 and we will educate students about the importance of midterm elections using the slogan: “**Midterms Matter: Hamline Votes 2022**” This slogan will be a familiar as it reappears around campus in Fall of 2022 in communications including posters, lawn signs, *The Oracle* (student newspaper), website, social media, etc. In addition, Hamline Votes will create and share compelling videos in the main student center that receive wide viewership.

**Remove obstacles from the path:** Hamline Votes will relaunch a resource website for students, and will share voter information at a kiosk in our student center coffee shop, at student organization fairs, and in classes to actively communicate to students. Hamline Votes will also provide socially-distanced transportation to the polls (an important perk in Minnesota).

## Activities

In the past, Hamline Votes used on-campus, online, and in-person events to motivate election participation. In light of the COVID-19 epidemic, Hamline Votes has focused efforts on strengthening relationships with student organizations and conducting outreach online, while remaining nimble and open to opportunities that allow for engagement in-person.

The in-person opportunities will again involve various orientation activities for new students. Hamline leadership, including the university president Dr. Fayneese Miller, will participate in orientation activities and stress the Hamline University's value of civic engagement. Civic engagement is a key learning goal in the Hamline Plan, the general education courses that are required for graduation. Hamline Votes leadership will present information about voter registration, education about Midterm and local elections, and explain the various ways to exercise one's right to vote in First Year Seminar and political science classes. Committee members also will table at two days of outdoor organizational fairs, to hand out registration materials, educational information, and buttons with our "Midterm Matter" slogan.

Hamline Votes will develop materials to raise awareness of the 72/22 goal and the importance of voting in midterm elections. These materials include banners, lawn signs, posters, buttons, stickers, and flyers. These materials will be handed out and displayed in high-traffic areas around campus. The committee will lobby faculty to encourage them to include civic engagement activities in their courses that educate and advocate for the importance of voting, specifically highlighting Midterm and local elections, and to request that they reduce the assignment load around November 8th, thereby reducing barriers so that students will be encouraged to take time on election day to vote.

Hamline Votes will use social media accounts including the Hamline University accounts, department accounts, and student organization accounts to engage specific student groups, particularly those students who have lower voter engagement, such as athletes. The Hamline Votes Committee is tentatively planning to hold an event on National Voter Registration Day. This event would be modeled on a successful online information event we held in 2020 with the Secretary of State, Nick Harper of the League of Women Voters, and a student representative. On election day the Hamline Votes committee will host an information table on the Midterm and local elections in the Anderson Center and provide transportation, through walking escorts and bus transportation, to the polls.

After the election, Hamline Votes will evaluate our success using NSLVE data and make changes to our approach as needed. Our long-term goals include working to make Election Day a holiday at Hamline University and to create a Hamline University Center for Civic Engagement.

# Leadership

## The 2022 Plan

Increasing student voting will mean motivating non-voting students to alter their behavior and ensuring that all students are supported in getting to the polls. We will follow an approach built from proven behavior change strategies including, the following:

### Point to the Destination

We set a clear, compelling goal: 72% student voter turnout in the 2022 Midterm Elections and commit to the following practices to reach this goal:

- Support this goal with a brief and memorable slogan: “Midterms Matter: Hamline Votes 2022”
- This goal will be communicated widely and the slogan “Midterms Matter: Hamline Votes 2022” will appear around campus in communications including posters, The Oracle (student newspaper), website, social media, etc.
- During the Midterm Election campaigns, the Hamline Votes committee will share compelling videos in the main student center that were widely viewed. In addition, members of the Hamline Votes committee will be present to educate and answer questions in person.
- When interacting with students at “Midterms Matter: Hamline Votes 2022” info tables, students will ask to make a written commitment to vote.
- We will create “Midterms Matter: Hamline Votes 2022” buttons and give them out to students who voted. These buttons enabled students to get a discounted beverage in the student center.

### Remove Obstacles from the Path

We will communicate to students that “voting will only take 30-minutes of your day.” We will continue our proven 2018 strategy of providing transportation and/or walking escorts to the polls.

### Consistent, Frequent, Educational, and Motivational Communication and Engagement

The Hamline Votes committee will use the university’s main social media accounts (mostly Instagram) from student organizations to engage specific student groups, particularly those students who have lower voter engagement such as athletes, science majors, and math majors. Through these means:

- We will educate students about Minnesota’s precinct caucuses on February 1st, 2022 via tabling, flyers, visiting classes, clubs and team practices. That date is right after Spring Semester begins, so our Hamline Votes team will meet in January to plan these activities/promotions, using similar tactics to promote the state Presidential Primary on March 3, 2020.

- Looking forward, we will inform students about Minnesota’s state primary election in August and maintain communications around the election on November 8, 2022. Our approach will include in-person engagement as allowed, and also include online efforts via social media and online outreach via orientation programming and administration and faculty support.
- We will create friendly competitions between students using online and other social-distancing tools. For example, our athletic teams will compete to have the most voters.

## **Actors**

The Hamline Votes committee will implement or delegate tasks to a student worker and to the Hamline University Student Congress (HUSC), who is actively supportive of this voting initiative. In addition, we will work with the Faculty Council and Hamline University Staff Association to encourage voting and to help amplify our “Midterms Matter” message.

## **Audience**

Our primary efforts will be directed to undergraduate and graduate students and a secondary focus will include staff and faculty. We will endeavor to get as many Pipers to vote as possible. Our social media and in-person activities will be geared toward students. Posters, banners and news articles will target faculty, staff and students.

## **Location**

Depending on Covid protocol we anticipate that some of our activities will be in person, and some will occur online. Some will happen on social media, other activities will be part of classes or special events, meetings and via email marketing.

## **Timeframe**

The work will begin in January 2022, planning for the information about February 1st precinct caucuses. Since this is a redistricting year, after the 2020 census, and legislative/congressional districts will likely not be finalized at that point, we will have to do some education about why there is redistricting, and how it can impact local and state races.

We will also promote the primary election and will continue with increased activity in August, when students return to campus, and September and October in the weeks leading up to the general election.

## **Purpose and Benchmarks**

The overall purpose is to increase our Midterm Election voting rate among Hamline University students in the November 2022 election. This goal will require a multi-step process.

1. During new student orientation in August, we will distribute information about voting via email, paper, and through one-on-one interactions between New Student Mentors (NSMs) and new students. In addition, the university President will communicate the

importance of civic engagement and voting to the students via a speech (in person or through a video).

2. Throughout the semester, student organizations will be contacted and provided with outreach information to help them participate in the social media campaign around voting.
3. If it is possible, in the week before the general election, Hamline Votes will table, poster, and distribute information in classes. In addition, on voting day, Hamline Votes will provide transportation to the polls.
4. Hamline Votes will use the main university social media accounts to broadcast videos featuring campus influencers that encourage election participation.
5. Hamline Votes plans to hold an online informational event for National Voter Registration Day. It will be modeled on our successful event in 2020 with the office of the Secretary of State, a representative of the League of Women Voters, and a student representative. We will include local elected officials as well.
6. Hamline votes will collaborate with the Minnesota Secretary of State on a statewide campaign to encourage college students to vote.
7. The President of Hamline University will send communications to the whole campus community encouraging participation in the election and voting.
8. On election day Hamline Votes will host an information table in the Anderson Center and provide walking escorts and bus transportation to the polls.

## Commitment

### **Improving Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement**

Hamline University President Fayneese Miller signed on to the President's Commitment to Vote Engagement. Civic learning and engagement are fundamental educational learning outcomes for students of Hamline University. In fact, the [President's Webpage](#) states as much: : *At Hamline University, we are not "sideline citizens." We in higher education have an obligation and a responsibility to prepare our students for all that it means to be part of a democratic society, to be civically engaged.*

### **Educating for Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement**

Hamline University regularly devotes institutional resources to promoting civic engagement among students. For example, the university has hosted debates for candidates that allow students to view in person and via close circuit links throughout campus. These events are also broadcast on local media outlets. In 2018, Hamline hosted a senate candidate debate and has in the past hosted gubernatorial debates.



For students, civic engagement is part of the Liberal Education as Practice (LEAP) component of the Hamline Plan, our general education curriculum. Pre-pandemic, LEAP Into Saint Paul has been an annual orientation program conducted by Hamline University New Student Programs and the Wesley Center that introduces first-year students to community engagement with the neighborhoods and communities that surround them with their First Year Seminar course. Joined by their New Student Mentors, each first year student collaborates on a project designed by their community sites such as weeding gardens, painting a room, and speaking with elders. LEAP Into Saint Paul seeks to begin or to continue the special relationship that Hamline University has with its surrounding communities rooted in our commitment to service. Depending on Covid protocols, we plan on resuming this program in Fall 2022. Existing Statements, Documents, and Learning Outcomes

Civic engagement is fundamental to the spirit of Hamline University. Methodist visionaries founded Minnesota's first university on a mandate to make the world better. Their mission? Educate the state's earliest leaders—before there was a state to lead. Out of this trailblazing spirit of civic betterment, Hamline University was born.

Still today, the Hamline community is driven by that same spirit, brought to life in the words of John Wesley: **"Do all the good you can. By all the means you can. In all the ways you can. In all the places you can. At all the times you can. To all the people you can. As long as ever you can."** These words unite our professors, alumni, staff, and students. And we continue to live them out and show our values in the way we champion justice and positive change and develop locally engaged, globally connected leaders.

Today, the institution takes the lead to provide a premier liberal arts education that transforms students of all backgrounds into the leaders they were born to be. Our learning outcomes for civic engagement are measured through the Hamline Plan, which every student has to complete in order to graduate. We emphasize civic engagement is with our new first year student population during fall orientation. In the past this has included a half day of services and reflection as part of their First Year Seminar class. With it being an election year, and due to the pandemic, we are shifting our focus in order to engage students in conversation about voting as civic engagement and act of service. Again, due to the pandemic we will be working on making content regarding Hamline Votes available virtually, as well as looking for creative ways to engage students in active programming on campus.

## **The Hamline Plan: General Education Requirements**

The Hamline Plan, which students must complete to graduate includes a Liberal Education as Practice (LEAP) requirement and a Global Citizenship requirement. At Hamline, global citizenship is the understanding of and engagement with complex, interdependent, or overlapping global systems and their legacies (scientific, socio-cultural, economic, political, or others). This requirement is intended to equip students to (1) become informed, open-minded, and socially responsible citizens who seek to understand how their actions affect both local and global communities, and (2) address global issues collectively and equitably.

In addition, the Hamline University to Hamline Elementary Collaboration has created partnerships in classroom settings to educate students at both Hamline University and Hamline Elementary about social and political issues. Notably, in Spring 2019, SOCJ 3980: Youth Organizing, Activism, and Social Change students partnered with a 4th Grade Class at Hamline Elementary to create video storytelling projects about social issues that both the 4th Graders and college students experienced.

## **Co-Curricular Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement**

Many co-curricular activities are infused with the values of civic engagement at Hamline University. For example, current programs include the aforementioned School of Education's Hamline to Hamline Collaboration, the Hedgeman Center's Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Commemoration and Day of Service, and the McVay Youth Partnership which places our students as mentors for immigrant youth in Saint Paul. The Wesley Center's LEAP into St. Paul, which we hope to relaunch in Fall 2022 depending on pandemic protocols, offers a community service initiative for new students and its Catalyst Alternative Spring Break Trips program offers all students the opportunity to give service in underserved communities locally and across the country.

In addition to these programs, many of Hamline's student organizations are classified as political and social action or advocacy and service. These have included:

- Asian Pacific American Coalition (APAC)
- Better Together Campaign
- Black Student Collective (BSC)
- Delta Tau Sorority (community service group)
- Feed Your Brain (addresses food insecurity on campus and in community)
- FUSION (advocacy for multi-racial identifying students)
- First Generation Scholars
- Global Students Society (GSS)
- Hamline African Students Association (HASA)
- Hamline Animal Rights Club (HARC)
- Hamline College Democrats
- Hamline Hand-In-Hand (tutoring organization)
- Hamline Indigenous People's Society

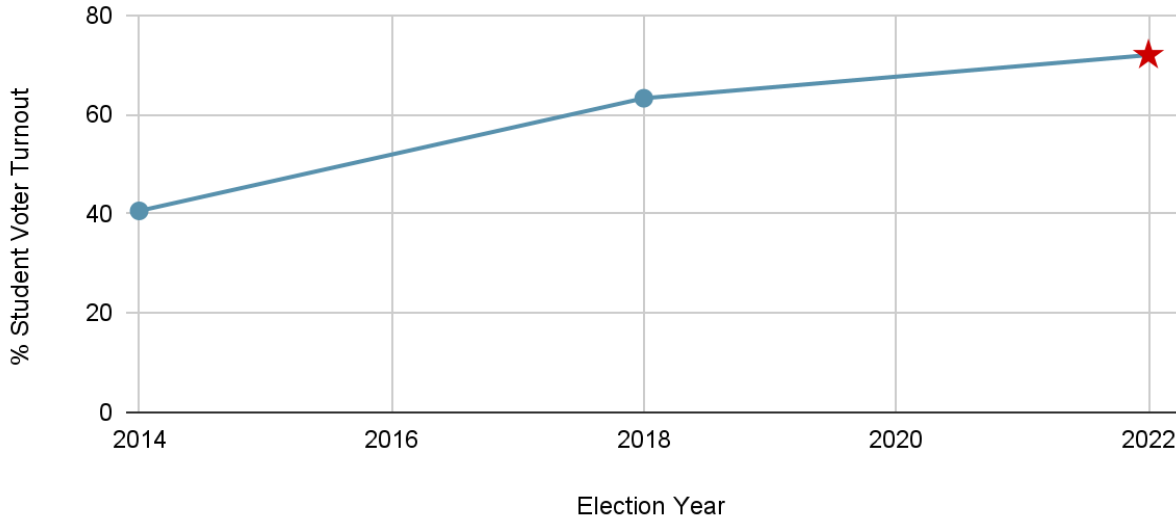
- Hamline Students for Reproductive Justice
- Hamline Undergraduate Student Congress
- Hispanic and Latinx Organization (HALO)
- Law and Justice Society
- Marketplace of Ideas
- Model United Nations
- Omicron Delta Kappa (service organization)
- Peer Wellness Educators
- Student Athlete Advisory Council (SAAC)
- Students for Sensible Drug Policy
- Students Preventing Sexual Violence (SPSV)
- SPECTRUM (advocacy for non-binary, LGBTQIA+ students)
- Voices Against Violence

Hamline has a 2-tier orientation program which includes programming over the summer and fall. Due to the pandemic, these programs were adapted to virtual/hybrid models and Hamline Votes was an active participant in this programming with new students. This next year, educational programming during orientation will include information regarding mail in ballots, finding your polling place, the importance of voting as an act of service.

# NSLVE Data & Landscape

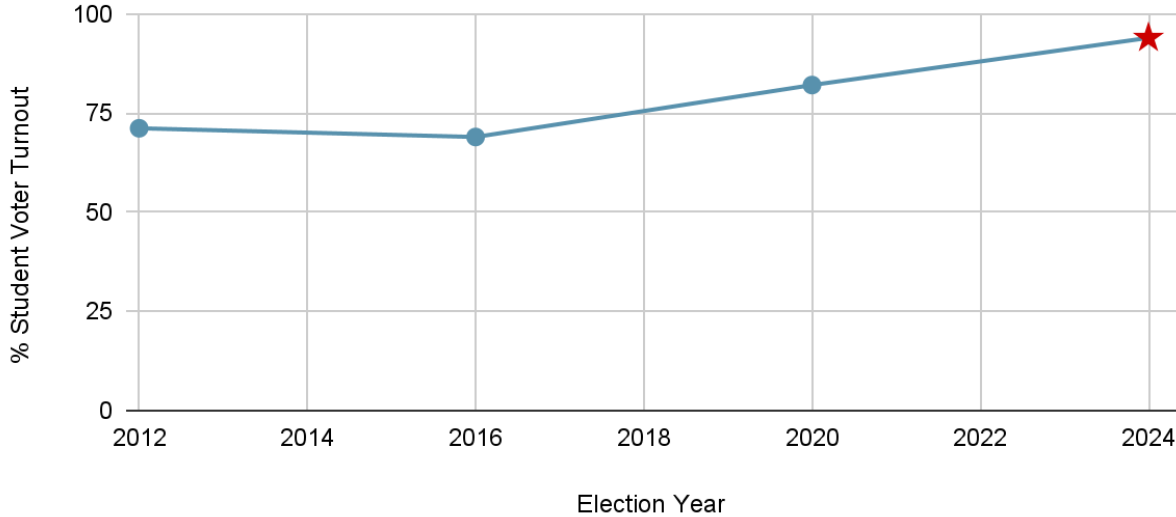
## Midterm Election Hamline University Student Voter Turnout 2014, 2018, and 2022 (Goal)

Graph #1



## General Election Hamline University Student Voter Turnout 2012, 2016, 2020, 2024 (Goal)

Graph #2



Hamline takes the lead in motivating students to vote. As shown above in Graph #1 “Midterm Election Hamline University Student Voter Turnout,” in 2018, Hamline University achieved a student voting participation rate at 63.3%, which was the highest in the nation among peer institutions and an increase of our own student voter turnout of 22.7% over our 40.6% turnout in 2014. For this achievement we received the following awards:

- Overall highest voting rate at a private, 4-year
- Overall highest undergraduate voting rate at a private, 4-year
- Highest undergraduate voting rate at a medium, private, 4-year

Our student voting rate goal is 72% for the 2022 Midterm Election.

As shown in Graph #2 “General Election Hamline University Student Voter Turnout,” in 2020, Hamline University achieved a student voting participation rate at 82.1% was an increase of our own student voter turnout of 13.1% over our 69% turnout in 2016. For these achievements we received the following recognition:

- 2016: Silver Status from the All In Campus Democracy Challenge for student participation rate 69%
- 2020: Platinum Status from the All In Campus Democracy Challenge for student participation rate 82.1%
- 2021: Hamline University President Fayneese Miller was awarded President’s Award for commitment to student voting in the last Presidential election

Our student voting rate goal is 94% for the 2024 General Election. We intend to build on our successes moving forward.

# Goals & Strategy

## Long-Term Goals

### Impact Desired

Hamline Votes seeks to promote informed and involved citizenry, building life-long voting habits by building a commitment to vote from 90% of students. We will build on the institutional commitment to civic engagement in a way that serves as a model for other universities. We will do this by doing the following:

- Create forums to connect students in one-on-one interactions with elected officials and candidates for office.
- Connect with the Office of Inclusive Excellence to engage students from marginalized communities with candidates and elected officials who share identities with them.
- Connect with the Hedgeman Center for Student Diversity Initiatives and Programs to host forums with candidates of color and elected officials.
- Connect with Sexualities and Gender Diversity Programs to host forums with LGBTQ+ candidates and elected officials.
- Encourage grass-roots activism by building a team of student volunteers committed to phone banking/text banking with other Hamline students to garner commitments to vote (or to remind them to vote within one week of the election) that are:
  - Similar to phone banking efforts of various campaigns
  - Similar to phone banking effort of Dean of Students Office to have full participation in Hamline CARES Act Grant Application

### Desired Learning Outcomes

- Students will be able to effectively research the platforms of candidates to understand how their vote will impact social, economic, and political issues over time.
- Students will have the skills to reach out to candidates to get answers to questions they have.
- Students will be able to articulate why their vote matters and share that information with other community members (for longer than just their time at Hamline)
- Students will be able to identify their elected representatives.
- Students will know the importance of Midterm Elections.

### 10-Year Goals

- Achieving a 90% student voting participation in both General and Midterm Elections and maintaining that high participation rate over the next 10 years, to have a year over year average of 90%
- Building the voting participation as close to 99% in the Fall 2030 Midterm Election
- Establish election day as a university holiday.
- Establish a center for civic engagement.

## Short-Term Goals

Hamline Votes has successfully integrated voting efforts and election participation into the first-year student curriculum and the classwork of political science majors. In future elections, Hamline Votes will focus on science and math majors in the upper classes to encourage greater participation.

One way to do this will be to develop a social media campaign. For the 2022 election cycle Hamline Votes will collaborate with the main Hamline University social media accounts (Instagram, Facebook, Twitter) and leverage student activities accounts across campus. The purpose of this outreach will be to reach students where they congregate online. The main university accounts have significant reach and provide a social media “home” for content that can be shared by other Hamline university accounts. The main messages in social media posts will include the following:

- Register to vote
- Anticipate the day of voting
- Distribute mail ballot requests on and off campus
- Assist students with voting out of state
- Make a plan to vote
- Timing: two times a week at first, then almost every day as the day to vote approaches
- Educating about the voting process
- Sharing interesting articles targeted at younger people voting
- Posting the event to other Hamline groups and pages to spread the word.
- Invite all of your Hamline friends
- On the Wesley Center Facebook page:
  - Sharing events as a reminder
  - Posting the “Your Vote, Your Voice” graphics and tagging friends in them on a consistent basis
- On athletic team social media accounts:
  - Teams share videos of “why I vote” or “plan to vote”
  - Hold friendly competitions between teams
- Print Campaign:
  - Posters and banners
  - Lawn signs around campus
  - Buttons and stickers
- In-person Events
  - Tabling fall, 2022
  - Putting the fun in voting. Providing information and snacks to students.

Hamline University will need a widespread push for a new holiday on election day. Hamline Votes will approach the student government for their support in working toward an election day holiday for the university.

In order to establish a center for civic engagement, Hamline University will need to explore funding opportunities and secure approval from leadership and the board of trustees. The first step in the process will be to consult with Campus Compact, an organization that supports civic engagement. Hamline is a member. The second step is to talk with peer institutions with such centers, for example Macalester College.



## Reporting & Evaluation

The primary measure of success will be voter participation. The Hamline Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Minnesota Secretary of State office collect the total student voting rate. Hamline University participates in NSLVE's effort to evaluate the students' voting rate participation. Hamline Votes will also use the results to modify and expand our work on campus. We expect to evaluate at the end of this year or the spring of 2021.

Secondary measures that will be looked at include social media engagement and qualitative feedback from members of the student government.

Hamline University will share the result from NSLVE with the All In Challenge team. In addition, the Hamline Votes team will report back to several grantors on the success of our efforts. Finally, university leadership will be presented with the outcomes.

All measures will be used to evaluate our success and propel efforts toward creating an election day holiday and a campus center devoted to civic engagement.