

# **Idaho State University Democratic Engagement Plan 2022-2023**

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This document serves as Idaho State University's Democratic Engagement Plan for 2022-2023 academic year. Idaho State University (ISU) started the program in spring 2022.

The goal of this action plan is to develop a framework for Idaho State University to continue to expand and implement its participation in ALL IN Democracy. This plan will serve as a framework for ISU's goals and for strategies to implement these goals and evaluate the success of meeting the goals. The plan will be implemented on ISU's campuses in Pocatello, Idaho Falls, Meridian, and Twin Falls.

Idaho State University is committed to democratic ideals. The mission of Idaho State University reads: "We engage students through learning and research opportunities that improve the intellectual vigor, cultural vitality, and health of our communities." President Satterlee has stated, "As a society, we can do better than we are doing now regarding civil political discourse. We all have a role to play in preserving the people's right to self-governance and it is critical to the stability of our democracy." The ALL IN Democracy project allows ISU to fulfill part of its vital mission in helping students see the importance of their role in a representative democracy.

The action plan developed through the spring and summer of 2022. In the fall of 2022, the project was able to start to develop a guiding team and implement projects and ideas. This plan will guide the project for the next year but it will be updated at least annually as the project continues to unfold and develop. The short-term goal has been to simply have a

functioning project. The long-term goal is to develop ISU into a model of civic engagement among its students when it comes to voter registration, voting, and student involvement.

The Office of Student Affairs at ISU is taking the lead on this project. The Associate Dean of Students will be in charge of this project after November 1, 2022. The development of this plan occurred through something of an adhococracy. Project originators worked hard to reach out to various groups on campus and to involve them in the project. Developing the project team is an on-going activity however and ISU will continue to expand the group.

### **LEADERSHIP**

The core groups involved on campus have been Student Affairs (Felice Otero, Associate Dean of Students, Destiny Lynch, Management Assistant), Housing (Bobby Arteaga, Assistant Director). Political Science (Mark McBeth, Chair and Professor), the ISU Library (Laura Gleason, Student Success Librarian), Marketing and Communications (Stuart Summers, Associate Vice President of Marketing), Academic Affairs (Karen Appleby, Associate Vice Provost), ASISU (Emma Watts, ASISU Senator), the Political Science Club (Cameron Dey, President), SAAC (student athletes group), the History Club, and the Philosophy Club. In addition, other groups are being added as we try to determine how to best have them participate. This includes the Honors Program and Academic Affairs both of which have indicated support and interest in the project. An external group includes the League of Women Voters.

There are still more groups to get involved and more groups to contact, our leadership development is on-going. Our goal in the first year has been to develop the ISU team and to have activities on the ISU campus. The League of Women Voters participated in our October 12, 2022 registration event and we plan to involve the Bannock County Election Office in the future.

The working group has the support of central administration. President Satterlee has committed his support to this project. In October, 2022, he signed the President's Pledge, The working group was developed in an ad hoc fashion. Political Science and Student Affairs were asked to start this project in early 2022. Bobby Arteaga was asked to work with Mark McBeth on getting the project going. Mark McBeth and Bobby Arteaga branched out to Athletics, Academic Affairs, Marketing and Communications, ASISU, and the ISU Library. Destiny Lynch in Student Affairs and Laura Gleason were instrumental in putting together a successful voter registration event and giving the project much needed energy and direction throughout fall 2022. Student Affairs and Destiny Lynch worked with Marketing and Communications to develop a logo and website to allow students to register online and to provide students with voting information. Other groups (Philosophy Club, History Club, Political Science Club, ASISU, Young Democrats, College Republicans) were asked to participate in the non-partisan voting registration event. Bobby Arteaga worked diligently by meeting with Honors, Athletics, Athletic student groups, and other groups. Between the start of school in late August and early October, the project started to take shape with events, logos, websites, and a social media campaign. There is still work to be done but there is a core group involved and it is inclusive but we will continue to seek to ensure that other groups will be invited to participate. Finding the best way for these groups to participate is the key moving forward. We do not yet have a formal structure but we have a group that works well together. The new Associate Dean of Students (Felice Otero) takes over the project in November, 2022 and she can better formalize the group and organize meetings. Thus, far the group has worked as an adhocacy. The group, however, worked remarkably well in coordinating projects and getting the project off the ground in a short 6-8 week period in fall 2022. A goal is to better institutionalize the group but that will occur starting in November, 2022. We have several individuals and groups

interested in participating but we are not yet sure how to include them. But we are confident that we will replace existing members as they leave the group. The level of interest in the project is quite high but we need a formal mechanism to recruit new members to replace current members as they step aside.

## **COMMITMENT**

ISU's Community Engagement mission reads as follows: "As an integral component of the community, Idaho State University develops partnerships and affiliations through the exchange of knowledge, resources, research, and expertise. Through a diverse university staff, faculty, and student body, ISU provides cultural, social, economic and other opportunities to enrich the lives of citizens." President Satterlee is committed to civic engagement and the role of universities in educating citizens to participate in a democracy. Again, he has signed the President's Commitment in October 2022 and has given his support to this initiative at the highest levels.

ISU is committed to student engagement as part of our community engagement mission. Felice Otero has student engagement as part of her formal job description. ISU is committed to having a diverse group of participants involved in this project. There are many different groups at ISU that are committed to student engagement and the importance of democracy. This project will better coordinate these different groups and provide an overarching vision of civic engagement. We are not there yet.

## **LANDSCAPE**

ISU is committed to civic engagement. In the past, there have been some uncoordinated efforts to register students to vote but this is the first formal and coordinated effort to do so. In

2022, President Satterlee asked faculty and staff at ISU to get involved in this project. We had our voter registration events in fall 2022 and we will then build upon this in future semesters and years. In addition, ISU plans for educational activities that will help students understand the importance of voting and the importance of democratic participation in a representative democracy. Our general education objectives include courses in Objective 6 which includes coursework options in American Government taught by the Department of Political Science and US History taught by the Department of History. The Department of Political Science offers other courses on US politics and US democratic government as well as courses focusing on civic engagement and political participation. In general, the College of Arts & Letters offers core liberal arts degrees to students. A liberal arts degree focuses on critical thinking and such critical thinking is essential to a functioning representative democracy. Nearly all departments in the College of Arts and Letters would have some focus on a citizen's role in society. Part of this project will be better working to coordinate academic efforts on campus to find and advertise courses and curriculum dedicated to civic engagement.

## **GOALS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES**

### Goals

Short term goal: Develop a working plan. The fall of 2022 saw the development of a Working Team and several projects. The fall was instrumental in ISU starting to develop a vision for this project.

Short-term goal: Develop an educational campaign for student voter registration. This has been accomplished with an extensive social media campaign, registration events, and posters and fliers distributed throughout the campus.

Short-term goal: Develop a campaign around a civic holiday (November 7, Election Hero Day).

This was achieved when ISU Athletics delivered gifts to election workers.

Short-term goal: Continue to reach out to the Student Athletic Advisory Committee (SAAC) and coaches at ISU. This has been achieved as several coaches have signed the Coaches Pledge and multiple athletes are involved in the project.

Short-term goal: Transition the point of contact to the new Associate Dean of Students. This occurred in late October, 2022.

Long-term goal: Develop a cohesive ISU coalition dedicated to promoting student engagement.

Long-term goal: Institutionalize student engagement, voter registration, and educational activities at ISU.

Long-term goal: 78% Voter Registration Rate across Big Sky Votes an increase from 74.3% in 2018 based on NSLVE reports.

Long-term goal: 45% Voter Turnout Rate across Big Sky Votes an increase from 43% in 2018 based on NSLVE Reports.

### Learning Outcomes

Idaho State University is committed to engaging students in the importance of civic engagement. Students will:

- Understand the importance of participation in democratic processes.
- Understand the importance of participation in community events including developing relationships with others who are participating.
- Develop the ability to develop empathy and understand the importance of learning about others and how they view the world.

- Use their knowledge from civic engagement in their chosen field of studies and use their own experiences in civic engagement to think critically in the classroom.

## **NSLVE**

ISU authorized the collection of NSLVE data in fall 2022.

## **STRATEGY**

The strategy has been to incrementally develop the team and sponsoring events. Student Affairs will be essential in ensuring that all students are informed about voter registration. The long-term strategy is for Student Affairs to coordinate with Academic Affairs to sponsor speakers and other activities on voter education. Finally, Student Affairs and the coalition will work to ensure that students know where to vote, how to vote absentee, and how voting rules in Idaho might impact student voting.

In terms of curriculum, the POLS 1101 American National Government course is an important course for students to enroll in to learn about civic education, the voting process, and the electoral system. Over time, the team will work with Academic Affairs and Deans to develop a list of courses where students can learn about democratic engagement. This would include POLS 1102 Introduction to Politics and other POLS courses related to democracy, democratic theory, and democratic processes. Other courses that are likely to be added include US history courses from HIST and political philosophy courses from PHIL. The first strategy will be to determine what general education courses deal with democratic engagement. From here, a longer list of electives and major courses dealing with democratic engagement will be developed and advertised to students.

## **REPORTING**

Student Affairs will share the report with the ISU coalition and ISU leadership through an

annual meeting. A report can be shared on the ISU website with Marketing and Communications conducting media releases.

## **EVALUATING**

Each year, Student Affairs and coalition partners will evaluate efforts by looking at voter registration data, activities on campus, and educational efforts. ISU will compare efforts with other Big Sky schools and network with these schools at events sponsored by ALL IN Democracy..

Specifically, all civic engagement programming will be evaluated. This will include:

- Coalitional debriefing after every event to determine what worked and what did not work.
- The tracking of voter registration numbers.
- Surveys of students to determine what activities best encouraged students to vote and participate in activities.
- Participation in the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE).
- Evaluation of participation at voter registration events.
- Evaluation of success of social media campaigns.

An evaluation report will be shared with ISU leadership and posted to the ISU website. Regular meetings will keep the team up to date on what activities are working and what needs to be improved.

**Last Updated: October 31, 2022**