

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Indiana University Bloomington's 2022 Action Plan for increasing student voter engagement combines elements of the All In Campus Democracy Challenge and the Big Ten Voting Challenge, both of which contributed to increased voter registration and turnout in 2020.

The combined initiative, with All In and the BTVC, brings together students, faculty, staff, and administrators to move toward a campus wide, unified vision of increased democratic electoral engagement. This collaborative model is adaptive and changeable. As the COVID-19 pandemic and evolving campus policies continue to affect the ways we register, educate, and turnout student voters, we are exploring creative approaches to outreach that focus on digital media, social media, and direct mail. Through these efforts, we will move toward full voter registration and maximum voter turnout through online and mail-in participation.

The mission of IU Bloomington's BTVC is to create both short- and long-term strategies to increase voter registration, nonpartisan education, and participation. Our mission is supported by and will continue to be implemented at all levels of campus: upper-level administration, faculty, staff, and both domestic and international undergraduate and graduate students.

Our campus wide BTVC steering committee builds networks, offers resources, and plans activities and campaigns to increase student civic engagement. Members include leadership from the Political and Civic Engagement (PACE) program and the Office of the Provost & Executive Vice President and representation from others including, but not limited to: New Student Orientation, Office of First Year Experience, IU Libraries, IU Athletics, Department of Political Science, O'Neill Civic Leaders, College Republicans, College Democrats, Black Student Association, and IU Student Government, as well as community representation from the League of Women Voters, the County Election Office, and more. The group seeks to continue strengthening a campus culture centered around democratic electoral engagement through voter advocacy, education, and action. In addition to seeing an increase in student voter turnout in the 2018 midterm election, more than two-thirds of eligible IU Bloomington students voted in the 2020 general election—an increase of nearly 22 percentage points from 2016, which exceeds the 13-percentage-point increase in nationwide student turnout. IU Bloomington's jump to 66.9% in 2020 from 45.2% in 2016 reflects a national trend of greater student engagement in the electoral

process and IU's participation in national efforts.

We are grateful for the ongoing support from upper level administration personnel to promote important messages from the BTVC and are confident that we can secure continued support. Also, we want to keep up collaborative efforts with students and student groups as a way to have maximum impact. A successful way to reach out to students is through all levels of the academy, from the top down as well as the bottom up, and we will keep this as a focus throughout our work. Student organizations represent places where students gather. This provides a critical opportunity to empower student leaders to engage their peers on voter registration, education, and turnout.

In the 2020 election cycle, we cultivated a crucial partnership with IU Athletics to have student-athletes informed and trained to learn and practice civic engagement, as models for their peers. **As a result of these efforts, we achieved 100% voter registration among players in ten sports throughout campus.** While athletics personnel have returned to focus on public sporting events, their commitment to civic engagement remains strong and we will harness that relationship for successful student outreach in 2022.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

As IU Bloomington's BTVC group gears up for an active, engaging semester to educate all students on the importance of voting and accessing reliable, well-rounded candidate information, we will also support students in overcoming barriers to voting and share guidelines on how to successfully cast a ballot. Our goal is to do our best, in all ways, to reach out across campus and increase electoral participation, especially to under-represented populations. We aim to create a more informed, engaged, and active pool of student-citizens who engage in democratic deliberation, understand the nuances of the voting process more fully, and who are more skillful at educating themselves about candidates and issues. We seek to motivate students to make a difference at the polls.

As we develop planning activities to address this mission, we are considering both where we see our campus culture moving in the long term and also focusing on the here-and-now activities needed to prepare for the November 2022 election. While the upcoming election cycle is part of the main focus for our Action Plan, we are also integrating long-term ideas throughout this report. The short-term goals are activities for the 2022 election and the long-term goals are institutionalizing the work and having it become part of IU Bloomington's culture. This allows us to be strategic as we develop networks and institutional infrastructure and activities to help increase and sustain student democratic engagement. Our work will make sustained civic engagement part of the ever-growing culture at Indiana University Bloomington.

We will track and report information on our activities and events, using such details as the number of volunteers involved, number of hours spent in planning and implementation, social engagement, and event turnout. We will also keep a journal to log information such as comments, reflections, emails, or other feedback about the event and students' experiences. On our BTVC website, we will continue to expand the media section, which highlights news media

stories and features about IU Bloomington's BTVC and student civic engagement.

We will assess our work in accordance with SMARTIE guidelines—those that are Specific, Measurable, Achievable/Ambitious, Relevant/Realistic, Time-Bound, and which focus on Inclusion and Equity. As we develop the Action Plan ideas included in this report, these guidelines will be kept at the forefront of our thinking and planning. We aim to be successful in our work and know it is important to have concrete ways to discuss and implement our ideas, to have our plan be as representative and inclusive as possible, and to allow the ideas and activities to be feasible for others to replicate.

STEERING COMMITTEE

Lisa-Marie Napoli, BTVC Co-Chair, and Director, Political and Civic Engagement (PACE) Program

Jennifer Piurek, BTVC Co-Chair, and Director, Communications and Special Projects, Office of the Provost and Executive Vice President

Mark Fraley, BTVC Co-Chair, Associate Director, PACE

Mara Dahlgren, Director, Student Involvement and Leadership Center, Division of Student Affairs

Margorie Hershey, Professor, Department of Political Science

Sarah Nagy, Senior Associate Director, Office of First Year Experience Program

Paul Helmke, Director, Civic Leaders Center, O'Neill School of Public & Environmental Affairs

Steph Slone, Strategic Communications Specialist, Office of the Provost

Ethan Gill, Multimedia Specialist, Office of the Provost

Ronda Stogsdill, Executive Assistant, Office of the VP for Diversity and Inclusion

Janae Cummings, Director of Communications and Marketing, School of Global and International Studies

Lisa Winters, Director for Leadership and Life Skills, Excellence Academy, IU Athletics

Emily Alford, Head of Government Information and Assistant Librarian, IU Libraries

Cassidy McCammon, Representative, PACE Student Events and Volunteer Coordinator

Tateana Cutter, Black Student Union

Joshua Pack, Black Student Union

Karen Wheeler, Supervisor, Monroe County Election Board

Brett Abbott, IU College Republicans

Jacob Schwartz, IU College Democrats

Mark Keck, Communications Manager, IU News

Kyra Mahoney, Bloomington League of Women Voters

Jen Wilkie

Lana Spendl, Speechwriter and Communications Specialist, Office of the Provost

Jake Brillhart, MPA candidate, O'Neill School of Public Affairs

Kirk Johannesen, Communications Consultant, IU Studios

Matthew Bagetta, Associate Professor, O'Neill School of Public Affairs

Steven Webster, Associate Professor, Department of Political Science

STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

IU Bloomington's BTVC highlights the importance of casting a vote, the meaning behind it, and the impact of voting on political representation and public policymaking. With each vote, a voice is heard and the collective impact can be great. Voting is the first step in moving toward healthy and constructive civic engagement.

This action plan highlights opportunities for voting, methods for helping students overcome obstacles to voting, and the benefits of what it means to participate in the democratic process of elections. Further, if a young person turns out for an election during young adulthood, it has been found that they will continue to vote into their 60s (Plutzer, Eric. "Becoming a Habitual Voter: Inertia, Resources, and Growth in Young Adulthood." *American Political Science Review* 96 (2002): 42).

Through marketing and promotions, IU Bloomington's BTVC can better convey the importance of a student-citizen, the importance of participating in the democratic process, and how these changes can create cultural changes to move toward healing democracy. Accessible polling sites, local community involvement, and having a voice regarding federal and international issues all support the model of engaged democratic citizenship. We aim to better organize and promote inclusion of different cultures in the democratic practice, and to remind everyone of the

significance of having our voices heard by participating in democratic deliberation, casting votes, and laying the groundwork for a lifetime of democratic electoral participation.

We do this in ever-changing ways based on societal needs and health through voter registration, non-partisan voter education, and voter turnout efforts. In particular, we are working to disseminate information by sharing the NSLVE report more widely and regularly campus-wide. Many classes will use this report to facilitate conversation, following the “Facilitating Political Discussions” guide authored by Nancy Thomas and Mark Brimhall-Vargas (Institute for Democracy and Higher Education and Tufts University). Additionally, we will utilize the creative ideas and connections of more students on our Steering Committee who engage in one-on-one connections with various student groups to share information and encourage dialogue about student voting.

By having student liaisons play a key role in making connections with campus student groups, we can build relationships and integrate systemic structures to support and maintain the work. Finally, we have a plan in place for succession when Steering Committee members move on, they ensure that there is someone in their place to carry on the work.

VOTER REGISTRATION

- We will design strategies and activities to integrate, execute, and institutionalize efforts with a goal of 100% student voter participation
- Organize and offer voter registration sessions (both online and in person, as appropriate), in collaboration with Monroe County Election Supervisor and those trained in voter registration
- Work with classes in the Media School to find new approaches for branding the work of the BTVC and to implement these ideas
- Create lawn signs with QR codes for voter registration and voter information; easily accessible and safe during times of covid-19
- Consistent display of digital ads or, if possible, tabling efforts weekly on campus throughout the semester in strategic locations
 - Areas where there is high volume of student traffic, either online or in areas such as the Wells library atrium; in particular, we will amplify our social media presence to “meet students where they are”
 - Participate in online or in-person opportunities at the following: Student Involvement Fair, College Expo, Pridefest, and other campus-wide and community events where it is likely to have a high number of students participating virtually or in-person.
 - Campus community events, such as First Thursdays, an Arts and Humanities event the celebrates civic engagement in a variety of forms, the College Fair, and other collaborations

- Voter registration and cultural celebrations, either online or in person, in conjunction with five cultural centers on campus: Asian Culture Center, First Nations Cultural Center, La Casa Latino Cultural Center, LGBTQ+ Culture Center, and the Neal-Marshall Black Culture Center.
- Research areas where students may have barriers to voter registration and find ways to help students overcome these barriers; create videos that explain different dynamics of the democratic process, especially the part about the timing of election results
- Renew TurboVote contract, with support from IU Student Government, and promote its utility for student use
- Promote census registration and the voter registration webpages; provide links to-and-from the site. Support the larger institution in developing their website, elections.iu.edu, in a collaborative manner to increase institutionalized approaches for the work.
- Provide educational materials online so students understand the value of voter registration, the deadlines associated with it, guidelines for how to register to vote, and the ease of the process
- Promote the BTVC through the IU Guides at the beginning of the semester and with New Student Orientation videos and programming
- Canvas course management system reminders and web links for voter registration.
- Message from the Provost to Faculty asking them to inform students of the value of voter registration and the October deadline for voter registration
- Message from the Provost and the President to all students emphasizing the importance of voting, the importance of democratic practices, and the acknowledgement of the challenges to democracy that we must overcome. Utilize these messages to weave support in strong ways.
- In collaboration with the Office of Student Affairs, make use of direct mail to engage students living off campus as well as the parents of students to maximize registration and turnout.

NON-PARTISAN VOTER EDUCATION

- Assess student needs, especially in terms of Maslow's hierarchy of basic needs, to gauge how to best continue to promote the value of democratic engagement. Meeting students "where they are" is a crucial piece for being effective, especially when considering the repercussions from COVID-19.
- Promote PACE's "Talk Democracy" campaign by offering a series of online Zoom conversations that creates opportunities for students to listen to different perspectives, ask questions, and explore their own thinking about democratic engagement.
- "Talk Democracy" series from government and advocacy organizations, in collaboration with other departments on campus.
- Update the Big Ten Voting Challenge website with information for students, faculty, and staff to access for a better understanding of the BTVC, non-partisan candidate information, the voter registration process, the do's and don'ts of the electoral process, transportation options for get-

out-the-vote efforts.

- Video series and social media blast from IU Communications

- Make a substantial investment to create new messages, in light of the pandemic and the tensions of the presidential election, to reach students on social media
- Video with athletes highlighting the importance of “one vote;” and every vote matters; create new video, in light of health precautions, to be sure students know that we “see” them and care about their well-being as engaged democratic citizens, even though they may potentially not be living on campus or attending all classes on campus.
- Promote Animated videos (three different messages)
- Difference between the primary and general election
- What to know about the general election
 - Things to bring to the polls

- Maintain efforts for Civic Engagement

- Use direct mail and alternative email addresses to send materials available for students to enhance electoral participation
- Continue to collaborate with and highlight the support from Monroe County Election Board members and Election Board Supervisor

- Dissemination of materials to inform students of candidate platforms and local issues in a balanced manner at BTVC events and voter registration sites.

- Work with IU Communications team in demystifying local elections through videos, graphics, and easy to digest materials on “Breaking Down the Ballot”. Materials will tie issues of national concern to their role in local elections (E.G. concerns about policing as related to local sheriff’s election)

- Provide a link to “Keys to the Candidates,” created by the League of Women Voters

- Promote the streaming Congressional debates and have discussions

- Centralize election and post-election event listings for access from all students, campuswide; collaborate with different departments and work on institutionalizing the significance of this work

- Introduce students to local candidates through zoom forums, classroom activities, and web-based content to ensure students are informed on their choices from the White House to the Court House.

- Take feedback from students and faculty and use this information to evaluate the programming and make changes. Be sure to integrate feedback at every stage of the work. For instance, reflect on past years as a starting point; use iterative feedback to shape the work, and in the end, debrief to prepare for the next upcoming election.

VOTER TURNOUT

- Promote awareness of mail-in voting as the most preferable option, especially with the challenges presented by Covid-19.
- Remind students of revised polling locations, as appropriate; use lawn signs on election day to guide students toward polling sites; include social media tags and website information for more information.
- Encourage President Whitten to address the significance of democratic citizenship and the importance of voting in her State of the Campus Address in the Fall and Written by Whitten column.
- Promote BTVC events on the Office of First Year Experience app.
- Educate students on the BTVC and the importance of voting during New Student Orientation
- BTVC promotional materials as giveaways:
 - Buttons
 - Stickers
 - Flyers
- Create opportunities and flyers to educate students on polling site locations and tips for absentee or mail-in voting procedures
- Digital signage created for each specific residence hall with information about their precinct location
- Provide tips and support for getting to the polls, assuming in-person voting is a safe option:
 - Use TurboVote to determine voter information
 - Highlight bus routes
 - Disseminate polling precinct addresses
 - List ride sharing options among students
 - Promote shuttle availability, as appropriate
- Provide information about the significance of voting with helpful tips, in Parent Newsletter series
- Highlight discounted/free rides available for election day (typically offered through Uber, Lyft, and Lime, etc.)
- Coordinate volunteers for election day oversight, either online to answer questions or in-person at the Indiana Memorial Union University Club polling site
- Provide snacks, entertainment, and a welcoming environment for students waiting in long lines

- Collaborate with campuswide units to continue to build the infrastructure needed on campus for real culture change; work closely with these units (including IU Police) to ensure a safe and fair election process

- Organize an “IU Votes Together” event, either online or in-person, where voter education materials are available; create a post-election event where students can engage support as needed

- Share resources and plans with other units on campus to promote civic engagement, such as with Residential Programs and Services, IU Corps, Office of Student Affairs, Center on Representative Government, and others to further institutionalize the work