ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge

Action Plan

Executive Summary

IUPUI is a premier urban public research university that has a mission of advancing the state of Indiana and the growth of its citizens through research and creative activity, teaching and learning, and civic engagement. It is because of this designation that we are focused on providing accessible civic engagement activities for our population to bridge the gap between higher education and community.

The ALL IN Democracy Challenge Action Plan was drafted by representatives from the Division of Student Affairs. This team included a mix of professional staff members, graduate assistants, and students. Our team was Niki Messmore, Coordinator for Civic Engagement; Brian Starkel, Senior Assistant Director, with assistance from our student Civic Engagement Assistant, Brant Johnson and Graduate Assistant, Daniel Tovar. It was supported for submission by our Assistant Vice Chancellor for Community Engagement, Jennifer Boehm.

Our action plan has four central goals that include understanding how to be a **1)** champion for voter registration, education, and turnout, **2)** development of impactful monthly programming, **3)** how to embed our strategies into the campus culture, and **4)** increase pathways of connection between coursework and co-curricular experiences.

Our action plan has been developed for ongoing assessment and revisions with major updates being conducted following the 2018 mid-term elections and the 2020 presidential elections. Our plan will begin in the new fiscal year, starting in July. The action plan was developed as an opportunity to bring focus into civic engagement efforts by the IUPUI Civic Engagement Working Group and to provide a method of accountability for the coalition.

Overall, IUPUI has commitment of a diverse partners for civic engagement, students who are actively involved, and a campus that values evaluation as a key for success.

Leadership Team

There is a cohort of offices and divisions who meet quarterly and are working in concert with an effort from the Institute for Democracy and Higher Education Research-to-Practice Initiative (IDHE). As opportunities become available, it is our hope to expand involvement from our student governments and councils, community organizations, and interested faculty and staff members.

It is convened through the chair, the Assistant Vice Chancellor, Jennifer Boehm, from the Office of Community Engagement. The advisory board consists of members of the Chancellor's Cabinet and academic deans that include the Executive Vice Chancellor and Chief Academic Officer, Kathy Johnson; Vice Chancellor for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, Karen Dace; Vice Chancellor for Community Engagement, Amy Warner; Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, Eric Weldy, and the Associate Vice Chancellor for Undergraduate Education and Dean of University College, Jay Gladden.

Our current efforts to increase civic engagement are supported faculty, staff, and students with the Division of Student Affairs, Multicultural Center, McKinney School of Law, Lilly Family School of Philanthropy, Office for Intercultural Literacy, Capacity, & Engagement, Center for Service & Learning, Office of Community Engagement, University Library, School of Public Environmental Affairs, Institutional Research and Decision Support, School of Science, and School of Liberal Arts and more.

The role of the team has focused on collaboration, increased communication of civic engagement initiatives, voter registration and education, issue based-advocacy, assessment and government 101 through a variety of activities and programs on campus. Each member of the team has been selected based on their role within the institution and connection to engagement efforts and student populations. Through the Division of Student Affairs liaison, Niki Messmore, the local Marion County Board of Elections is involved each year in the Mock Election, a program for voter education.

Our Coalition

Name	Title	Office
Jennifer Boehm	Assistant Vice Chancellor	Office of Community Engagement
Brian Starkel	Senior Assistant Director	Campus Center and Student Experiences, Division of Student Affairs
Niki Messmore	Coordinator, Civic Engagement	Campus Center and Student Experiences, Division of Student Affairs
Amanda Bonilla	Assistant Director for Social Justice Education	IUPUI Multicultural Center, Division of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
Karina Garduno	Assistant Director of Multicultural Programming	IUPUI Multicultural Center, Division of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
Art Farnsley	Research Professor of Religious Studies and Director, Center for Civic Literacy	School of Liberal Arts
Amanda Friesen	Associate Professor of Political Science	School of Liberal Arts
Lorrie Brown	Director of Student and Staff Engagement	IUPUI Center for Service and Learning
Courtnee Yarbrough	External Relations	University Library
Tamra Wright	Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion	School of Public and Environmental Affairs
Khalilah Shabazz	Director of the IUPUI Multicultural Center	IUPUI Multicultural Center , Division of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
Dan Griffith	Director, Conflict Resolution and Dialogue Programs	Office of Intercultural Literacy, Capacity and Engagement, Division of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
Anne Weiss	Assistant Director for Assessment	Office of Community Engagement
Anne Mitchell	Director of Survey Research and Evaluation	Institutional Research and Decision Support
Peggy Stockdale	Professor, Psychology	School of Science

Commitment

The institutional leadership demonstrates a strong commitment to civic learning and democratic engagement through our mission statement, vision, and strategic plan.

The mission of IUPUI places a central focus to '*advance the state of Indiana and the intellectual growth of its citizens to the highest levels nationally and internationally through research and creative activity, teaching and learning, and civic engagement*'.

The vision has a focus '*To be a leading urban research institution recognized for the success of its students, its advances in health and life sciences, and its intellectual, economic, and cultural contributions to the well-being of the citizens of Indianapolis, the state of Indiana, and beyond*'.

Our strategic plan for the university, *Our Commitment to Indiana and Beyond: IUPUI Strategic Plan*, plays an essential role in shaping our priorities for the future. Within the document, it outlines clearly in *Priority 3* a focus on contributions of the well-being of the citizens of Indianapolis, The State of Indiana, and beyond. Within the priority, it outlines a goal to deepen the campus commitment to community engagement, which focuses on increasing service and experiential learning opportunities, stimulating economic development, and using outreach and engagement to address urban community needs.

This commitment is supported by IUPUI's Community Engagement Classification provided by the *Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching*. We are amongst the first cohort of campuses to receive this designation. Additionally, through diligent work, the campus was awarded the Engaged Campus of the Year in 2018 from the *Indiana Campus Compact* for exemplary commitment to improving the community and educating students for civic and social responsibility.

Through our commitment of our current voter engagement, we received the Bronze Seal for the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge in 2016.

IUPUI's PLUS+ (Profiles of Learning for Undergraduate Success) initiative has been developed as an opportunity to prepare all students to communicate, innovate, and engage local and global communities to solve the problems of the 21st century. These learning outcomes include our desire for our students to become a community contributor. It is our hope that students are active and valued on and off campus through responsible, civically engaged action. These new outcomes will be implemented in the 2018-2019 academic year. During the upcoming academic year, individual units will be work on action plans towards full integration, develop appropriate courses, programs, and co-curricular experiences for the university to code appropriately.

Landscape

In the most recent, National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) report, we saw a **7.4% increase** in voter turnout for 2016 raising it to **57.7%** and **82.1% of IUPUI of students who were registered to vote**. While these statistics are encouraging, we saw opportunities to outreach to specific academic departments, student organizations, and raise a general awareness for civic engagement through the year; not just during elections. IUPUI's first-year student population had the lowest percentage of students registered to vote, some schools on campus had far below average voting rates, and as the state of Indiana, we have a low voter turnout during midterm elections.

The Center for Service and Learning bridges that gap between academic affairs, the community, and course-work that focuses on civic/service engagement. This office plays a central role in assisting faculty in curriculum development of service-learning courses, research and evaluation, and developing strong partnerships with community members and organizations. The office has developed several tools and taxonomies including the Civic-Minded Graduate, Civic-Minded Professional, SOFAR Framework (Student, Community, Organizational Staff, Faculty, Campus Administrators/Staff & Community Residents) and the IUPUI Taxonomy for Service Learning Courses. Throughout the university, within academic units, courses are available for a variety of majors that value the themes of civic engagement.

Our current efforts have a focus on voter registration and education, assessment, advocacy, and government 101. The efforts are supported faculty, staff, and students with the Division of Student Affairs, Multicultural Center, McKinney School of Law, Lilly Family School of Philanthropy, Office for Intercultural Literacy, Capacity, & Engagement, Center for Service & Learning, Office of Community Engagement, University Library, School of Public Environmental Affairs, Institutional Research and Decision Support, School of Science, Office for Women, and School of Liberal Arts.

These cohort of offices and divisions meet quarterly under the banner for the Institute for Democracy and Higher Education Research-to-Practice Initiative (IDHE).

Highlights of our current programming include voter registration and voter education on a monthly-basis by our civic engagement assistants (CEA) within the Division of Student Affairs. They have created presentations on How to Vote, Understanding Government, Advocacy 101, Government 101, Community Organizing, and Indianapolis Public Transit. Programming under the CEAs have included Mock Elections, Debate Viewing Parties, and National Voter Registration Day.

Our advocacy work has a focus about bringing current local and national/international issues into the forefront for our students. These efforts include the IUPUI Chancellor's Diversity Lecture Series supported by the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. Topics have included immigration with Sonia Nazario, sustainability with Winoa LaDuke, and gender with Londa Schiebinger. Additionally, there are several school and department initiatives that have brought in topics of police reform, gentrification, civic health, law, and women in business.

From a student level, our Scholar Justice Scholars and Alternative Break Scholars provide opportunities on and off-campus to move through issues of race, power, privilege, and oppression. The Social Justice Scholars put together efforts for topical monthly discussions, a one-day leadership conference, and our annual Tunnel of Oppression. Past topics have included intersectionality, feminism, allyship, women in politics, human trafficking, and more.

Our Alternative Break Scholars plan and implement two fall break trips and eight spring break trips to a variety of cities with a focus on a variety of topical issues that have included health and poverty, consumerism, food security, LGBT Youth Experiencing Homelessness, mental health, and corporate social responsibility. All of these opportunities provide our students with exposure to topics to push them beyond their comfort zone and build a pathway for engagement.

IUPUI has 18 different academic schools and over 29,000 students. As such, we have a variety of stakeholders who value civic engagement on campus and there is an opportunity to increase our connection between the working group and interested parties. For our programs, there are opportunities to increase funding to expand the impact on campus.

The external factors for success on the IUPUI campus include changes in registration procedures and local voting laws that require consistent communication to our students, faculty, and staff members. As a public institution, our programming reflects a bi-partisan effort towards education and involvement and as such has structured policies and procedures for government involvement. This requires careful planning and foresight to ensure we are in compliance with our university code. As an institution, we must have a strong commitment towards education as the State of Indiana has historically had low voter turnout and few early voting sites.

There are several resources that can contribute to our success. These include our partnerships with the Marion County Board of Elections, League of Women Voters, and Indiana Disability Rights. In Indianapolis, we currently house our Indiana University Government Relations which serves as a clearinghouse for local and national government contact information, updates from the Indiana State House, and serves as a liaison between state and federal government. As an urban institution, we have a variety of advocacy and issue-based community organizations that allow civic engagement to thrive.

The resources we need to ensure success are primarily institutional buy-in which will be imperative to program success, support from the various on campus stake holders, and constant communication with these stake holders to ensure we are working towards a common goal.

Goals

Overall, we hope to have an impact on increasing the awareness of political issues and the significance of the individual voice. As such, there are four desirable goals that include understanding how to be a **1)** champion for voter registration, education, and turnout, **2)** development of impactful monthly programming, and **3)** how to embed our strategies into the campus culture, **4)** increase pathways of connection between coursework and co-curricular experiences.

Currently, we have a strong coalition of departments and offices that are invested in advancing civic engagement at IUPUI. We hope to take our enthusiasm and continue to nurture relationships within departments and our 500+student organization community. We are hoping to learn how to activate opportunities throughout campus for voter registration, education, and turnout.

Opportunities such as the ALL IN Democracy Challenge, IDHE, and the Voter Friendly Campus designation will allow us to benchmark and research what other campuses are doing. We hope to use this new network of colleagues to gain insight into impactful programming that is happening on campus. With an ever-changing student population, it is essential that we use benchmarking as accountability just as much as validation in our programs. In an environment where fiscal responsibility is imperative, this research will allow us to maximum what we are providing to students on a monthly basis.

Programs and strategies are valuable only if they outlast our coalition and are embedded into the campus culture. We are hoping to learn how other campuses have designed programming, policies, and procedures that have been successful in sustainable changes. Within the working group, there will be opportunities for collaboration on all-campus initiatives and large-scale programming activities.

Lastly, there is an opportunity to strengthen the coalition surrounding civic engagement course leading into community-based experiences and co-curricular learning.

Strategy

Successful accomplishment of our four goals will require multiple approaches in strategy.

As mentioned prior, there is a collective group of staff and faculty from specific offices across student affairs, diversity, academic affairs, and community engagement who are meeting regularly to work on the Institute for Democracy and Higher Education Research-to-Practice Initiative (IDHE). We desire to cultivate this group and (a) incorporate students and/or (b) form a separate student committee to focus on political engagement at IUPUI. For example, this is an initiative that would be appropriate for the undergraduate and graduate student governments to become involved with and eventually to lead the committee. This committee can become a hub of political engagement news and events shared by student leaders representing different student organizations or academic schools.

Engaging more faculty and staff is key to our strategy. This engagement could look like increased participation on the political engagement committee or it may look like program partnerships. Civic engagement is a core value of the institution, but it can be at times difficult to know what different academic programs or units are planning in regards to programs that touch on politics. The goal of this work is to mobilize faculty, and staff who are interested in the subject to connect, discuss, and plan appropriate programs alongside one another instead of in separate silos. Ideally, new partnerships across units will develop in order to advance all four of our goals.

In order to expand past our limited capacity with the small staff within our office, program partnerships with students, faculty, and staff will lead to success with our goals. One key aspect of our voter engagement strategy, for example, is to develop a grassroots model to train students on voter registration so they can train their peers in

classes, residence halls, and student organizations. Through utilizing a grassroots model and a train-the-trainer approach, we can work to drastically increase the number of registered students at IUPUI. An important partner in this work to support our training will be the League of Women Voters of Indianapolis, a non-partisan voter education organization.

This concept of grassroots change work will occur through voter education presentations as well. Facilitated by two to three student hourly employees at minimum, our office will provide free presentations on issues of voter education, how to vote, and understanding local government to student groups. Faculty can request presentations for class, staff can invite presentations for various student program groups such as Honors or residence life, and students can invite speakers to their organization meetings. It is ideal to do a minimum of 15-20 presentations this fall prior to the November elections in order to advance voter education. Ultimately, the strategy is to increase the amount of presentations on campus.

Finally, our strategy will be to optimize community-campus engagement for students. IUPUI students are engaged at higher rates than other campuses due to a focus on service-learning. To continue this work, we plan to take students off-campus to the Indiana State Capitol building (located .9 miles from campus) and the City-County Council meetings (located 1.4 miles away). We also want to bring community advocacy organizations and political groups to campus in order to connect students with the different opportunities they have to become engaged past voting in an election.

Reporting

Our action report will be shared with the Civic Engagement Working Group through our quarterly meetings. An executive summary of our activities will be delivered to the Chancellor's Cabinet on a semester basis. All of our assessment findings and progress of our action plan will be publicized through annual reporting within individual departments and units. Our NSLVE data is shared through the Office of Community Engagement. Many of the statistical information will be incorporated through our social media campaigns and our official news unit, IU Communications.

Evaluation

While assessment takes place through all of our programming efforts, there are two central assessments that are being utilized to drive civic engagement at IUPUI. The National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) report helped us establish a baseline for how to craft further initiatives and outreach.

Through our work with the IDHE, our first task as a coalition is completing a Campus Climate for Political Learning and Democratic Engagement Self-Assessment. Our second step will focus on establishing IRB approved focus groups. Our focus groups will become our second assessment and will allow us to develop recommendations for changes in policies, programs, departments, physical spaces, and other attributes. Through the committee, we will be able to take thoughtful steps towards recommended interventions. These two tools will allow us to summarize our findings, share results with the campus through discussions, and begin to develop recommendations for the future.

Through our programming efforts, we will have the opportunity to run a demographic report on all student attendees through our student experience management system, The Den. This information will allow us to contribute to the conversation and evaluation any connects between on campus participation and the NSLVE data. Through voter registration, we find the value in tracking participation throughout the year. We expect registration numbers to be high at the beginning of the year as student register their peers but want to understand how we can provide consistency in messaging to avoid a drop-off. Through the new PLUS+ learning outcomes, we will be able to develop surveys to understand where learning is taking place within our programs.

Within our Civic Engagement Working Group, we will be able to rapidly share results for action along with campus contributors sharing through annual reports to directors, deans, and chairs.

Contact Information

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