



Indiana University South Bend Democratic Engagement Action Plan: 2022-2023 Academic Year

This plan was created using the Votes & Ballots Action Planning Form. We highly recommend editing and expanding upon this draft before submitting for review.

Throughout this document, we mention the Strengthening American Democracy Guide as a resource for your review. We encourage you to turn to that resource for guidance and support as you complete your action plan!

I. Executive Summary

This action plan was developed by Elizabeth Bennion, Chancellor's Professor of Political Science & American Democracy Project Director to communicate our strategy for increasing both the registration and turnout rates of voters at Indiana University South Bend. The planned activities outlined here will be carried out over 2022-2023 Academic Year, on and around our campus in South Bend, Indiana.

The following groups will be leading this work at Indiana University South Bend in order to accomplish our goals and further institutionalize our commitment to civic learning, democratic engagement, and youth participation in elections:

- Undergraduate Students
- Graduate Students
- Faculty
- Civic/Political/Community Engagement Center
- Student Affairs Staff
- Academic Affairs Staff

The mission of our initiative is:

- The #IUSBVotes Coalition promotes and supports student political learning and participation in democracy.

The action plan is designed to create a comprehensive, campus-wide effort to ask every IUSB student to register and vote in the 2022 midterm election and to foster long-term political learning and engagement during and between election cycles.

How can you improve this section? Visit the *Strengthening American Democracy Guide* and review the *Guiding Questions* to ensure your *Executive Summary* includes everything that you feel should be addressed.

II. Leadership

Elizabeth Bennion, Chancellor's Professor of Political Science & American Democracy Project Director will be overseeing our work to increase civic learning and democratic engagement on campus. They will be supported in this work by:

- Chancellor Susan Elrod signed the Higher Education Presidents' Commitment to Full Student Voter Participation for the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge. She appointed Elizabeth Bennion a Chancellor's Professor and tasked her with coordinating the Campus Action Plan. The chancellor leads the campus and, together with her Chief of Staff, Elizabeth Paice, will communicate our campus-wide commitment to nonpartisan democratic engagement and full student voter participation to all campus stakeholders.
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- Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs Jill Pearson is also involved in the initiative's leadership. As chief academic officer, Dr. Pearson will communicate the campus commitment to all members of the Academic Cabinet, each of whom will promote democratic engagement efforts in their own units. Academic cabinet members, who are engaged in our campus leadership team include: Tracey Anderson (Interim Dean, Judd Leighton School of Business and Economics), Hope Smith Davis (Dean, School of Education), Jesús García-Martínez (Dean, Vera Z. Dwyer College of Health Sciences), Otrude Moyo (Director, School of Social Work), Tami Martinez (Interim Dean, Ernestine M. Raclin School of the Arts), Brenda Phillips (Dean, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences), and Susan Thomas (Interim Dean, Library Services).
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- Other Cabinet members involved in our #IUSBVotes leadership team include Keith Dawson (Registrar), Michael Mancini (Director, Continuing Education), Connie Peterson-Miller (Director of Admissions and Advisor to the International Students Association), Monica Porter (Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs), Carolyn Schult (President of the Academic Senate), Jay Vanderveen (Director of the University Center for Excellence in Teaching), Xiaoxu Shan (Director of Institutional Research), Lorie Williams (Director, Financial Aid), and Erika Zynda (Contracts and Grants Coordinator).
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- The deans will help communicate the importance of educating for democracy to their department chairs, program directors, and faculty and encourage faculty to incorporate voter registration and education activities into the classroom. They will also help identify Faculty Civic Engagement Champions and send our discipline-specific messaging to faculty to share with students via email, class announcements, and Canvas announcements.
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- The Registrar will main up-to-date course information to aid in scheduling in-class and Zoom presentations and partner with us on a long-term project to incorporate voter registration into the course registration process. The Director of Continuing Education will consider hybrid campus-community voter education events that can help us to connect campus and community while creating a sustainable financial model for broader student-engaged, community-focused civic education work.
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- The Director of Admission/International Student Association Advisor will help us to engage international students in our voter registration and education efforts and help us to connect domestic and international students in ways that educate and engage both populations.
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- The Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs (who also serves as the director of our Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) will help us to plan programming and outreach efforts that reach the widest group of students possible, allowing us to focus on under-represented students and to overcome turnout gaps identified in our NSLVE report.
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- The President of the Academic Senate will ensure that our team gets space on the senate agenda to share our plans with faculty and seek greater faculty engagement with planning and implementation of our Campus Action Plan.
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- The Director of the University Center for Excellence in Teaching (UCET) will work with Dr. Bennion to schedule faculty workshops designed to promote civic knowledge, skills and experience - including training them to register voters, use the voter engagement Canvas module, and demonstrate either the indianavoters.com portal or the All In portal to students.
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- The Director of Institutional Research will help the team to collect and analyze useful data to supplement the NSLVE and better understand the political landscape on campus.
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- Meanwhile, the Director, Financial Aid will work with Dr. Bennion to identify work-study eligible #IUSBVotes Democracy Fellows and to educate fellows, and their faculty/staff advisor, on the requirements attached to work-study positions. Similarly, the Contracts and Grants Coordinator will work with Dr. Bennion, and other members of the team, to prepare and submit grant applications to fund campus-wide civic/election education and engagement efforts.
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- Additional members of the team will include Tony Vickrey (General Supervisor of Support Services) who will ensure appropriate set-up for campus events, Ada Douglas-Plummer (Head of the Service Workers Union on campus) who will organize unionized staff to assist with National Voter Registration Day and other campus events (including a minimum of eight hours of contractual paid reassigned time to work for the #IUSBVotes team during the fall 2022 semester), Gail McGuire (Director of Community Engagement) who will help to advertise and promote events (like public forums and candidate debates) co-sponsored with -- and directed toward -- larger community audiences, Betsy Lucal (Director of First Year Experience) who will help us reach all new freshman through our newly required first-year seminars, Neovi Karakatsanis (Director of the Honors Program) who will incentivize honors student leadership and volunteerism by making #IUSBVotes events part of the service hours requirement for all honors students, and graphic design instructor John Thompson, who will help to identify prospective #IUSBVotes graphic design interns and advise the team on our promotion materials including computer graphics, animated videos, and other creative Zine-style options for reaching students through creative visual messaging.
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- Eileen Villanueva (Campus Event Planner), Scott Strittmatter (Director of Student Life and advisor to Titan Productions and the SGA), Jennifer Brisco (Residence Coordinator), and Christian Martinez (Student Body President) will join the #IUSBVotes Democracy Fellows in rounding out our #IUSBVotes Team. The Director of Student Life and SGA President will help us engage diverse student clubs and organizations (e.g. Black Student Union, Latino Student Union, Queer Student Alliance) in our work. They have already agreed to sponsor Constitution Day along with several of our civic holiday events and are working on a student organization funding program that will incentivize participation in #IUSBVotes initiatives.
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- The Campus Event Planner provides a one-stop shop for campus event planning (including room reservations, furniture and AV reservations, catering reservations, and more), while the Residence Coordinator will help develop a training program for Residence Assistants that includes a Dorm Storm or House Competition, voter registration programming during Move-In Day and other key Community Building events, and watch parties for political debates and election night returns. Other staff members, including the payroll administrators, bookstore director, political science/criminal justice/ADP secretary, and more will help us to carry out our plans, while not being official members of the #IUSBVotes Team.

This coalition is diverse and inclusive of:

- Representation from different parts of campus, including student leadership, Representation from different perspectives and areas of expertise, Trusted leaders and organizations who support communities that are historically underrepresented in democracy, Leaders who can help with outreach and power building by bringing more people across campus in to our work, Leaders who have the ability to set priorities and staff members whose assistance is required to carry out plans and host events on our campus

Our group plans to meet Monthly starting August 1, 2022 (with 1:1 and small group meeting happening with greater frequency) at The Chancellor's Board Room and Online

In the event that our leadership leaves campus or is no longer involved in this work, we have a succession plan in place. The Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences will appoint a new American Democracy Project Director whose job description will include leading/coordinating the #IUSBVotes Team.

We are also partnering with the following organizations from the Students Learn Students Vote Coalition to support our efforts on campus:

- We plan to partner with American Democracy Project, American Political Science Association, All In Campus Democracy Challenge, National Voter Registration Day, Vote Early Day, Students Learn Students Vote Coalition, Ask Every Student, Campus Election Engagement Project, League of Women Voters of the South Bend Area, League of Women Voters of Elkhart County, Indiana Debate Coalition, Institute for Democracy in Higher Education (NSLVE), Voter Riders, and Issue Voter. We may also partner with Up to Us, When We All Vote, Civic Nation, Campus Vote Project, and the Scholars Strategy

Network. We have indirectly partnered with NASPA, NCoC, and Young Invincibles in the past and will do so again in the future if the right situation/opportunity arises. We may also seek out the assistance and support of the United States Student Association to conduct a follow-up national survey of student leaders (similar to the one Dr. Bennion and J. Cherie Strachan conducted six years ago). The key will be for all of the partnerships to assist with the successful implementation of our Campus Action Plan.

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- Note that we also partner with local media organizations. The South Bend Tribune prints and promotes our online voter guide. The local ABC, NBC, and CBS affiliates, along with the local public television and radio stations, partner with us to televise candidate debates, and all of these outlets provide news coverages of key campus voter engagement events.

How can you improve this section? Visit the *Strengthening American Democracy Guide* and review the *Guiding Questions* to ensure your *Leadership Section* includes everything that you feel should be addressed.

III. Commitment

Our institution and our campus leadership demonstrates commitment to improving civic learning and democratic engagement. We also see this same commitment reflected in our institution's values. They state, "Mission Statement Indiana University South Bend is this area's premier comprehensive public university dedicated to serving the needs of North Central Indiana and beyond. As a regional campus of Indiana University, IU South Bend provides a diverse population the opportunity to affordably earn a prestigious IU degree through its quality graduate and undergraduate programs. With its caring faculty and staff, IU South Bend is committed to an inclusive, student-centered approach that focuses on preparing its students for both the workforce and postgraduate education through rigorous coursework, research, and creative activity. We are a catalyst for social mobility that contributes to the vitality of our region by educating informed individuals, thoughtful stewards, innovative professionals, and responsible leaders. The campus mission to create thoughtful stewards, innovative professionals, and responsible leaders who serve the region, and beyond, sounds a lot like the civic engagement mission of the American Democracy Project - to create citizens equipped to make a meaningful difference in their communities. As with our strategic plan (see below), the commitment to civic engagement is implied (without using that phrase) and the commitment to democratic engagement is not explicit. The commitment is real, but it is not explicitly stated in core written documents defining the campus mission and strategic plan. This should be improved in future missions statements and strategic plans. Example from the Strategic Plan: Goal 5: Enhance Community, Regional and National Partnerships. -Share the talents of our faculty, staff, students, and alumni to strengthen our community, region, nation, and world. -Formalize, coordinate, and promote existing and new partnerships that integrate community engagement in campus culture, including curricular, co-curricular, and volunteer activities. -Develop and enhance mutual and reciprocal relationships and partnerships among faculty, staff, students, alumni, and local and regional non-profit organizations, government entities, business, and industry to ensure positive community outcomes. -Produce annual evidence of the extent, nature, and impact of our external engagement activities. -Perform an assessment of our external engagement activity and identify the needs of our communities. Create a plan with goals for our engagement activity. -Identify opportunities to expand connections and build partnerships in our community, region, nation, and world to meet our engagement goals. -Strengthen partnerships that open doors to educational opportunities."

We also have had a senior leader commit to civic learning and democratic engagement on our campus.

On campus, we've seen:

- Voter education resources
- Political clubs or student organizations
- Campus leaders promoting voting
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- Voter registration tables
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- Signage promoting Election Day

- Voter information tables, candidate forums and debates, debate watch parties, virtual and in-person classroom-based voter registration drives.

On campus, we've experienced:

- Voting in student body elections
- Political speakers
- Walks / rides to polls
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- Registering to vote
- Civic Holiday events (such as National Voter Registration Day, National Voter Education Week, and Vote Early Day)
- Deliberative dialogues
- Election-related event programming including candidate forums, candidate speed dating, and candidate debates

The emphasis on civic learning and democratic engagement could be increased.

How can you improve this section? Visit the *Strengthening American Democracy Guide* and review the *Guiding Questions* to ensure your *Commitment Section* includes everything that you feel should be addressed.

IV. Landscape

The following tables provide a brief overview of the landscape of our campus. This information is based on data collected from 2021-22 when our total student enrollment was 4,942.

Enrollment Data:

Undergraduate	Graduate	Full Time	Part Time
88.50%	11.50%	30.00%	70.00%

In-State	Out-of-State	International Students	On-Campus Residents	Commuter
98.00%	2.00%	2.70%	400.00%	4,042.00%

Gender Demographics:

Men	Women	Non-Binary	Transgender
35.40%	64.60%		

Age:

18-21	22-24	25-29	30-39	40-49	50+

Racial Demographics:

Asian	American Indian / Alaska Native	Black	Hispanic	Native Hawaiian / Pacific Islander	White	2 or More Races
2.10%	0.10%	7.60%	15.00%	0.10%	66.00%	5.70%

Our institution has also utilized the following data gathering tools:

- Ask Every Student First Step Form
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- National Survey of Student Engagement
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They help to inform our institution's civic learning and democratic engagement efforts by Professor Bennion talks with the Chancellor, Executive Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, and campus Deans and Directors about how the NSSE and AES framework should inform our Campus Action Plan for the coming year(s).

How can you improve this section? Visit the *Strengthening American Democracy Guide* and review the *Guiding Questions* to ensure your *Landscape Section* includes everything that you feel should be addressed.

- We have processes in place for registering large percentages of our students.
- We have ways in which we communicate voting information to our students.
- We use the resources readily available to develop and implement civic learning and democratic engagement on our campus.
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- Voter engagement efforts on campus are nonpartisan.
- We are able to engage student leaders for the leadership of our initiative.
- We have a working relationship with our local election office.
- We have working relationships with community partners who are invested in civic learning and democratic engagement.
- Faculty, staff, and students across campus are willing to "step up" to help with voter engagement efforts campus/local groups are prepared to supplement base funding and grant funding to support this work

With this in mind, we have set the three goals that we would like to achieve over the next academic year:

1. Increase the percentage of students who are registered to vote compared to the last midterm election in 2018.
2. Increase the percentage of students who cast a ballot in the midterm election compared to 2018.
3. Exceed the national turnout average for campuses nationwide.

We have also set three goals that we would like to achieve over the next five years:

1. Expand the number of student organizations engaged in voter registration, education, and mobilization initiatives.
2. Expand the number of faculty members who are actively engaged in voter registration, education, and mobilization initiatives.
3. Increase the visibility of our commitment to democratic engagement (through revisions to our mission statement, strategic plan, website, and press releases)

We would also like to incorporate voter registration into all freshman seminars by 2024 and achieve voter parity across racial and ethnic groups, with students of color voting at the same rate as white students.

How can you improve this section? Visit the *Strengthening American Democracy Guide* and review the *Guiding Questions* to ensure your *Goals Section* includes everything that you feel should be addressed.

VI. Strategy

Below, we have outlined a strategy describing how we will bring this vision to life in the coming months and years.

These are tactics that we **are already doing** in the **short term** (within the next year):

- VOTER REGISTRATION: Voter registration in the classroom - Voter registration on Zoom - Voter registration tables - Voter registration signage - Voter registration buttons - Voter registration info at Bookstore pick-up and ID pickup - Voter registration Canvas module - Voter registration at Move-In Day, Voter Registration at Welcome Week, Voter Registration on Constitution Day, National Voter Registration Day
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- VOTER EDUCATION: National Voter Education Week - Voter education tables - Voter education sessions on campus - Voter education session on Zoom - On-campus and Online open “office hours” for voter Q&A - Candidate forums/debates - Deliberative dialogues on key issues shaping local/state/national elections - Voter education Canvas module & ready-to-use assignments
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- VOTER MOBILIZATION - Get-out-the-Vote signage - Get-out-the-Vote tables/buttons - Vote Early Day - Party at the Polls

These are tactics that we **plan to do** in the **short term**:

- In addition to all of the above, we plan to add friend-to-friend calling, texting, emailing, and social media outreach campaigns plus “dorm storm” style house-vs.-house competitions in student housing and customized, targeted pre-scripted messages for faculty across campus to use when registering and mobilizing student voters in their own academic units/disciplines.

These are tactics that we **hope to do** in the **short term**:

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These are tactics that we **are already doing** for the **long term** (beyond the next year):

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These are tactics that we **want to do** in the **long term**:

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These are tactics that we **hope to do** in the **long term**:

- Institutionalize democratic engagement efforts by formalizing the #IUSBVotes task force as an ongoing part of dean, director, administrator, and student leader roles.

Institutionalize Civic Holidays by writing them into the job description of the campus American Democracy Project Director. Explicitly link our new First Year Experience to our democratic engagement goals. Explicitly include our civic and democratic engagement goals into the language of future campus mission statements and strategic plans. Establish a polling place on campus.

How can you improve this section? Visit the *Strengthening American Democracy Guide* and review the *Guiding Questions* to ensure your *Strategy Section* includes everything that you feel should be addressed.

VII. National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE)

Our campus has access to our National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) data for 2020. In 2020 our registration rate was 84.1%. In comparison to the data from four years prior in our NSLVE report, this rate increased.

In 2020, our voting rate was 62.9% and our voting rate among registered students was 74.8%. During this year, our voting rate was lower than the national average.

In our NSLVE report, we had racial data for the following groups:

- Asian
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- Black
- Hispanic
- White
- 2 or More Races

For the racial groups that have recent voter turnout data, we saw the following groups increase in voter turnout compared to four years ago.

- Asian
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- Black
- Hispanic
- White
- 2 or More Races

Our campus also has access to our NSLVE data for 2020. In 2018 our registration rate was 80%, our voting rate was 41.4% and our voting rate among registered students was 51.7%.

All demographic groups increased their participate rate (comparing 2020 to 2016). This includes undergraduates and graduate students, freshman, sophomores, and upperclassmen, full-time and part-time students, women and men. Men and women participated at roughly equal rates (with 63% of women and 62% of men casting a ballot in 2020). Older students participated at greater rates than younger students, with 61% of 18-21 year olds versus 82% of 50+ year olds casting a ballot, but it was younger students who increased their participation rate most in 2020. (Ages 18-21: 50%→61%; 22-24: 51%→62%; 25-29: 53%→62%; 30-39: 59%→67%; 40-49: 74%-73%; 50+: 85%→82%). All academic majors increased their participation rate (compared to 2016) except for communication/journalism (-1 p.p.), history (-2 p.p.), & physical sciences (-4 p.p.). The students with the highest participation level in 2020 were studying Multi-Interdisciplinary Studies (79%), Public Administration & Social Services (75%), Visual & Performing Arts (72%) and English Language & Literature (70%). The only academic field in which a majority of students failed to cast a ballot was physical sciences (with only 46% of all majors casting a ballot in 2020). This was a reduction from 2016, when 50% of all physical sciences majors cast a ballot.

How can you improve this section? Visit the *Strengthening American Democracy Guide* and review the *Guiding Questions* to ensure your *NSLVE* section includes everything that you feel should be addressed.

VIII. Reporting & Evaluation

We plan to share this Action Plan internally when it is complete by taking the following actions:

- Email to members of our campus coalition
- Email to campus administration
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- Email to the Chancellor

We plan to share this Action Plan externally when it is complete by taking the following actions:

- Post on the campus website
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- Share with the entire campus by posting a link to the complete Action Plan on the Daily Titan, our daily all-campus newsletter

We will collect feedback on this plan by:

- Sending a post-election survey to students
- Sending a post-election survey to faculty
- Regrouping with campus coalition to debrief and reflect
- Integrating feedback collection into individual campus efforts
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We plan to evaluate our success by:

- Reviewing our NSLVE data and looking for improvements year over year
- Seeking out feedback throughout the action planning process from people outside of our action planning team
- Revisiting our goals, identifying goals achieved and not achieved, and adjusting our short and long-term goals accordingly
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How can you improve this section? Visit the *Strengthening American Democracy Guide* and review the *Guiding Questions* to ensure your Reporting & Evaluation Section includes everything that you feel should be addressed.