

Indiana University Southeast All In Challenge Action Plan 2017-2018

I. Executive Summary

Indiana University Southeast is a regional campus of Indiana University located across the river from Louisville, Kentucky. The IU Southeast service area is composed of 16 largely rural counties in southeast Indiana and north-central Kentucky but also includes the Louisville metropolitan area. We are the only public comprehensive university in our region, and more than a third of our students are first-generation degree seekers. Our student body is richly diverse as it includes not only traditional students, but a large number of non-traditional students as well: many of our students are parents, military veterans, full-time employees, and public servants.

We at Indiana University Southeast are working hard to provide our students with the best education possible so that they can not only fulfill their personal goals, but can also contribute as active citizens. All of our students are citizens of the global public sphere; now more than ever we seek to give them the tools they need to be productive citizens so their voices may be heard.

This action plan, for the 2017-2018 school year, seeks to provide IU Southeast a blueprint for increasing political and civic engagement on our campus.

II. Leadership

The coordinators of this year's action plan are

- Kelly Ryan, associate professor of history, and Dean of the School of Social Sciences.
- Margot Morgan, assistant professor of political science, and the IUS Campus Coordinator for the American Democracy Project

Morgan and Ryan are currently building a working group to oversee the implementation of the action plan and to promote civic and political engagement on campus. The working group will include representatives from the relevant academic, administrative, and staffing stakeholders. We hope to include the following individuals:

- Seuth Chaleunphonh, Dean of Student Life, and Student Diversity Advocate
- Angela Salas, Associate Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, Director of the Honors Program, and Professor of English
- Gloria Murray, Interim Director for the Office of Service Learning and Community Engagement, and Professor of Education

- Mark Jallayu, President of Student Government Association
- Joe Wert, Professor of Political Science, Faculty Advisor for the Student Government Association, and Faculty Advisor for the College Republicans
- Rhonda Wrzenski, Professor of Political Science, Faculty Advisor for the College Democrats, and Faculty Advisor for the IUS ACLU Student Organization
- Donna Dahlgren, Director of the IUS First Year Seminar program, and Professor of Psychology
- Rachel Terlep, Communication Specialist, Office of Marketing and Communications
- Faculty Member from the School of Nursing
- Faculty Member from the School of Natural Sciences
- Faculty Member from the School of Business

Our goal is to have our inaugural working group meeting in January of 2018 and to meet monthly from then on.

III. Commitment

Indiana University Southeast’s commitment to civic learning and democratic engagement is best expressed in the following quotation from the IUS Mission Statement and the Strategic Plan 2016-2021:

“As a public comprehensive university, its mission is to provide high-quality educational programs and services that promote student learning and *prepare students for productive citizenship in a diverse society*, and to contribute to the intellectual, cultural, and economic development of the region” (emphasis mine).

The institution values the key elements of liberal democratic culture including pluralism, open discussion, equality of opportunity, and community engagement. This is reflected in the IUS statement of its core values:

- **Nurturing Environment**
We foster a caring campus community that honors diversity, innovation, loyalty, teamwork, mutual respect, and fair play. We work together to create a culture of inclusion and dignity for all.
- **Connectedness**
We engage with and support the many communities to which we belong and from which we draw our strength and potential. We go to extraordinary lengths to serve our communities efficiently and knowledgeably.

Further, the university’s commitment to diversity both on the grounds of equity and community enrichment is illustrated in its diversity statement:

We grow and evolve as a university through seeing equality and representation as a goal and human right for everybody. Indiana University Southeast is committed to recruiting students from diverse populations and to making the climate and curriculum welcoming and equitable. Students will leave the university with a raised level of awareness of the history of equality and difference and attain international awareness, so that their understanding of academic disciplines, society, and the workplace will be enhanced, and they will be receptive to and promote valuing and respecting difference in their lives and in the workplace.

IV. Landscape

Currently there are many disparate individuals and groups at IU Southeast who are working to promote civic education and political engagement; however, they are not operating in a coordinated fashion. Individual actors are unaware of what the others are doing, and as a result there may exist redundant efforts and/or wasted opportunities. The extent of the civic engagement efforts of actors on this campus is unclear – there is a definite need to gather information on who is doing what and when.

That said, it is all the more inspiring that IUS had such a successful year in terms of promoting political engagement. During the 2016-2017 school year, Student Life and the Student Governmental Organization worked together to promote political engagement on campus through their “Know Voting, Know Change—No Voting, No Change” initiative. IUS was awarded a silver seal by the All In Campus Challenge for achieving a campus-voting rate between 60-69% for the 2016 elections. This effort, spearheaded by SGA president Mark Jallayu and dean of student life Seuth Chaleunphonh, involved the coordination of numerous campus groups including the College Republicans, the College Democrats, the Political Science Club, Residence Life and the Office of Marketing and Communications, the Office of Service Learning and Community Engagement, and The Horizon student newspaper.

We see the “Know Voting, Know Change—No Voting, No Change” initiative as an excellent model for both the primary elections in 2018 and the general elections in 2020. Further, it serves as a model for how to coordinate the efforts of various groups to maximize their effectiveness.

V. Goals

Our general programmatic ambitions are to

- Strengthen and deepen connections among students and lead to greater dialogue, community, and interaction among diverse groups

- Increase students' ownership of their education leading to higher graduation rates
- Better prepare students for their post-college lives as workers and citizens in a multi-cultural world.

To meet these ambitions and to be in-line with the mission of IU Southeast, we have developed the following long-term goals:

- Increase student voting rates by 5% from 2016-2020
- Incorporate media literacy into the general education curriculum by 2024
- Continue to host debate watch parties during presidential years
- Host campus forums/discussions on political topics at least twice per semester by 2020.
- Increase institutional support for political engagement and civic learning

Short-Term Goals:

- Establish a working group that will meet monthly beginning spring 2018
- Create a database of all the faculty, administrators, student groups, and support staff who are working to promote civic education and political engagement; specify who is doing what kind of work
- Add voter registration information to the university's website
- Incorporate media literacy into POLS Y103: Introduction to American Politics and JOUR-C 200: Introduction to Mass Communications
- Register 75% of incoming students to vote by October 1, 2018

VI. Strategy

Short term goals and accompanying strategy:

- 1) Establish a working group that will meet monthly beginning spring 2018
 - Morgan and Ryan will finalize the list of potential group members
 - Morgan and Ryan will send out an invitation to each member in January 2018
 - Once the group has been established, Morgan and Ryan will set up a preliminary meeting and monthly meetings to coordinate campus efforts
- 2) Create a database of all the faculty, administrators, student groups, and support staff who are working to promote civic education and political engagement; specify who is doing what kind of work
 - Morgan and Ryan will create a civic education and political engagement survey to be sent to all faculty, administrators, students, and staff that will ask them to detail any relevant activities
 - Ryan will be collecting a survey of High Impact Practices in Social Sciences classrooms, which includes civic engagement, to get a greater sense of Social Sciences engagement and practices

VII. Reporting

Once finalized, the action plan will be shared with the working group and relevant administrators. With their permission, Morgan and Ryan will post the plan on IUS website.

VIII. Evaluation

In terms of evaluating voter registration rates on campus, IUS will rely on the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) to provide data.

To evaluate the progress made towards attaining short-term and long-term goals the working group will write a self-evaluation at the end of each academic year. It will include notes for future initiatives. This self-evaluation will be used by the working-group to hone their strategies and better attain their goals.