

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

Carrie Chapman Catt Center for Women and Politics

2022 Iowa State Student Voter Engagement Action Plan

Submitted to:

ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge

January 24, 2022

Executive Summary:

Welcome to the Iowa State University (ISU)'s 2022 Student Voter Engagement Action Plan. This plan was developed by Dr. Karen M. Kedrowski, Director of the Carrie Chapman Catt Center for Women and Politics, with input from ISU's Andrew Goodman Foundation students and students working on the Go Vote 2: Innovation Sprint.

This action plan uses the framework described in *Strengthening American Democracy*, third edition. The plan enumerates Iowa State's student voter engagement strategy for the 2022 midterm election. Specifically, it seeks to Ask Every Student to vote and to make progress towards the University's full participation goals.

This action plan was developed to implement the University's and the Board of Regents' stated goals to educate students to be engaged citizens. This action plan also serves as a road map with specific strategies and evaluation targets to measure the team's success.

This action plan begins on February 1, 2022 and continues through December 31, 2022. The action plan will be updated as needed and as circumstances arise. The action plan will be available on the Catt Center website and distributed to stakeholders on and off campus.

The action plan will be implemented primarily by the Catt Center and the student leadership. However, they will partner with faculty, staff, and students from across campus to carry out specific strategies.

The values of diversity, equity, and inclusion are woven throughout this document. Specifically, they include working with student affairs offices who serve underrepresented student groups, outreach to commuter students and student groups with low-turnout populations, targeted messaging and engagement with STEM students, and engaging international students.

Leadership

Working Group Leadership: Iowa State's Voter Engagement efforts are led by the Carrie Chapman Catt Center for Women and Politics and its Director, Dr. Karen Kedrowski. Student leaders will be Student Voting Ambassadors (hereafter "ambassadors") who will complete internships with the Carrie Chapman Catt Center. The ambassadors will be either enrolled for academic credit and/or paid a stipend. Stipends will be provided by the Andrew Goodman Foundation (for two students), the University, or through donations or grants.

One Andrew Goodman Foundation student will be enrolled in AY 2022-23; the other is responsible for recruiting her replacement. In addition, six students are engaged in an ongoing “Innovation Sprint” cosponsored with the Department of Political Science and the Student Innovation Center (SIC). These students are developing the voter engagement plan for 2022 (and collaborated on this action plan) and are interested in continuing as ambassadors in 2022.

Leadership Succession: The Andrew Goodman Foundation students are responsible for recruiting their replacements before graduation. In addition, the collaboration with the SIC has brought in a diverse cadre of students to work on voting engagement. The Catt Center also refreshes the student activist pool through its internships. The faculty and staff leaders will be replaced by colleagues or replacements in their offices.

Campus Coalition: Dr. Kedrowski successfully recruited a coalition of faculty and staff members from across campus to work on student voting engagement in 2020. However, a number of these individuals have moved into other positions or left the University. Kedrowski is in the process of reconstituting the coalition:

Confirmed Coalition Members (as of January 22, 2021):

Karen M. Kedrowski, Director, Carrie Chapman Catt Center for Women and Politics
Sophia Magill, Director of Federal Relations, Office of the President
Octovio Bartalotti, Associate Professor of Economics
Matt Wetstein, Assistant Professor of Physics
Mack Shelley, Professor and Chair of Political Science
Michelle Talbott, Sorority and Fraternity Engagement
Sharron Evans, Dean of Students and Interim Director of Multicultural Student Affairs
Brady Talley, Ivy College of Business
Cheltzie Miller-Bailey, Center for LGBTQ+ Student Success
Rita Case, Veterans’ Center
Brian Meyer, Strategic Communications
Amanda Knief, University Lectures Program

Invited Members (As of January 21, 2022)

Margaret Sloss Center for Women and Gender Equity
Civic Engagement Committee, Student Government
Department of Athletics
Department of Residence
Destination Iowa State (new student fall welcome program)

Additional Possible Coalition Members (Not yet identified):

- ✓ **Student Voting Ambassadors:** These students will comprise the student leadership team, and be responsible for recruiting and managing the Student Voting Champions (**Target: 5-7 Ambassadors**).
- ✓ **Student Voting Champions:** The ambassadors will recruit and manage student voting champions (hereafter “champions”) who will be schooled on the basics of Iowa voting laws

and who will be expected to engage in a minimum of four (4), 30-minute tabling or other outreach activities during the fall semester. **(Target: 30 champions)**

- ✓ **Academic Colleges:** The group will identify one contact in each Dean's Office to distribute targeted messages to departments.
- ✓ **Student and Post-Doc Governance Bodies:** This includes the Student Government Civic Engagement Committee, the Graduate and Professional Student Association, and the ISU Post-Doctoral Association. These are a means to distribute information, provide funding, and recruit champions.
- ✓ **Student Clubs and Organizations.** Forty-three (43) student organizations are listed under the "Political and Activism" category of student organizations. All will be invited to join, with special efforts to engage across the ideological spectrum. In addition, we will reach out to identity-based student organizations, such as the Black Student Alliance, Society for the Advancement of Chicanos/Hispanics and Native Americans in Science, and the Pride Alliance, to make sure these organizations receive information about voting.
- ✓ **Commuter Students,** through their student organization, United Residents Off-Campus (UROC).
- ✓ **Student Innovation Center.** This new facility on campus engages students in creative problem solving with on- and off-campus clients. It has sponsored a four-week "Innovation Dash" and an eight-month "Innovation Sprint," both designed to tap students' ideas to promote student voting engagement.
- ✓ **Student Media,** including the *Iowa State Daily* (student newspaper) and KURE, the student radio station.
- ✓ **Vice President for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.** Representatives from this office will help ensure that our communications and outreach are consistent with the University's Principles of Community and its DEI goals.

Off-Campus Partners: Iowa State University has several off-campus partners who are interested in voting engagement. They include:

- ✓ The Story County Auditor's Office (responsible for election administration)
- ✓ The League of Women Voters of Ames/Story County
- ✓ Science Rising, a national organization that promotes civic engagement among scientists. This group has agreed to partner with ISU in 2022.

The coalition will communicate regularly via email with individual follow-up as needed. If individuals need to step away or leave their positions, Dr. Kedrowski will reach out to determine whether someone else in the office or a student can assume their tasks.

COMMITMENT

Elements of Iowa State University's commitment to civic learning and engagement is present in its mission, strategic plan, the general education program, and other key documents.

First, Iowa State is one of three "Regents' Universities," public four-year institutions that are governed by a common board. The Board of Regents' Mission Statement embraces, "Civic responsibility that enhances the quality of life." The Board's Core Values include "practices for

transformative growth,” which consist of “civil collaboration” and “inclusive discourse.” Another Core Value, Ethical Behavior, calls for “transparency;” “open and effective communication;” and “public accountability, stewardship, and service,” all of which speak to civic engagement and good government.¹ This commitment is communicated to the public through its website.

Second, Iowa State University’s Mission Statement is to “Create, share and apply knowledge to make Iowa and the world a better place.”² This broad statement certainly includes producing citizens who think critically and participate actively in the democratic process. Similarly, the University’s Strategic Plan Goal One calls for the University to produce students who are “...well-rounded citizens and informed critical thinkers...”³ These documents are available on the Office of the President’s page on the ISU website.

Third, President Wintersteen signed the Presidents’ Commitment to Full Student Voter Participation in 2020 and was instrumental in encouraging all the Big XII presidents to sign. This led to the expansion of the Big XII Voting Challenge and the conference’s permission to use the Big XII logo in its publicity.

Fourth, the University’s key documents reflect its commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. For instance, its Strategic Plan Goal Four is to “Continue to enhance and cultivate the ISU Experience where faculty, staff, students, and visitors are safe and feel welcomed, supported, and valued by the university and each other.”⁴ Similarly, the University adopted its Principles of Community in 2005 at the instigation of a graduate student, Phil Hernandez.⁵ University leaders refer to them frequently and posters listing them appear across campus. The six principles include “respect,” “freedom from discrimination,” and “richness of diversity.”⁶

Fifth, innovation is a cornerstone of the Iowa State experience, as evidenced by its motto “Innovate at Iowa State;” its national ranking for innovation and entrepreneurship⁷; and the SIC, an interdisciplinary initiative to foster student creativity and problem solving, housed in a new \$85 million building with the same name. The SIC’s mission calls for providing opportunities for civic innovation and has partnered with the Catt Center and the Department of Political Science in Spring and fall 2021 on innovation projects to encourage student voter turnout.

Finally, Iowa State participates in the Voter Friendly Campus Initiative, the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge, the Big XII Voting Challenge, the Iowa Voting Challenge, and National

¹ Iowa Board of Regents. *2016-2021 Strategic Plan*. p. 3.

https://www.iowaregents.edu/media/cms/StrategicPlan20162021_8DF57DE6E608A.pdf. The new strategic plan is under development.

² Iowa State University Mission and Vision. <https://www.president.iastate.edu/projects/mission>.

³ Iowa State University 2017-2022 Strategic Plan. p. 4. <https://strategicplan.iastate.edu/iowa-state-university-strategic-plan-2017-2022.pdf>.

⁴ Iowa State University 2017-2022 Strategic Plan, p. 8.

⁵ David Roepke. July 1, 2021. “Where the Principles of Community Come From.” *Inside Iowa State*. <https://www.inside.iastate.edu/article/2021/07/01/principles>.

⁶ Iowa State University Principles of Community. <https://www.diversity.iastate.edu/connect/principles>.

⁷ “Iowa State 11th for entrepreneurship studies in 2021 Princeton rankings.” Iowa State News Service. November 17, 2020. <https://www.news.iastate.edu/news/2020/11/17/princetonranking>

Voter Registration Day. These affiliations are noted on the Catt Center’s web page. Iowa State was the first, and to date only, higher education institution in Iowa to earn Voter Friendly Campus designation, a fact that President Wintersteen likes to point out to her in-state colleagues.

Civic engagement programs are primarily assessed through the Campus Climate survey, the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) and the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE). Other evaluation metrics are included in the “Goals” section below.

LANDSCAPE

Iowa State’s campus climate has several notable strengths and some potential barriers to success.

Resources Supporting Voter Engagement:

- ✓ **A History of High Student Voter Turnout:** One strength is Iowa State students’ higher than average voter registration and turnout rates. Table 1 shows Iowa State’s student voter turnout rate is, historically, significantly higher than the national and regional rates. Moreover, it is increasing from presidential election to presidential election, and midterm election to midterm election.

According to its NSLVE report (and as reflected in Table 1), 72.9% of ISU students voted in 2020, compared to 66% nationally, earning ISU a Gold Shield from the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge.⁸ In 2018, 43.4% of ISU students voted, somewhat higher than the national average of 38.5%. This was a 19 point improvement over 2014 and the largest improvement of any Iowa college or university in the Iowa Voting Challenge. These results earned ISU a Gold Shield from the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge and an award from Iowa Campus Compact.⁹

Table 1: Iowa State Student Voter Registration and Turnout Rates Compared to Nation and Region.

	2012		2014		2016		2018		2020	
	% Registered	% Voted	% Registered	% Voted	% Registered	% Voted	% Registered	% Voted	% Registered	% Voted
ISU	79.3	60.9	70.9	24.4	86.4	62.0	82.7	43.4	89.3	72.9
NSLVE	70.9	49.1	63.8	18.2	77.5	52.9	75.6	38.5	83.0	66.0
18-24 WNC	59.8	46.6	43.0	17.9	58.0	46.3	55.5	38.3	66.6	58.0
18-24 Nation	53.6	41.2	42.2	17.1	56.8	43.6	48.4	33.3	59.8	51.4

Sources: Iowa State University NSLVE reports; Institute for Democracy in Higher Education NSLVE reports; and United States Census Bureau. NSLVE refers to all colleges and universities participation in NSLVE, “WNC” refers to the West North Central division of the Census Bureau’s Midwest region. It includes Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, and South Dakota.

- ✓ **Curriculum:** The general education program requires students to study disciplines that ask them to think critically about major questions confronting our society: 12 credit hours in the

⁸ Iowa State 2020 NSLVE Report.

⁹ Iowa State 2014 & 2018 NSLVE Report (revised).

Arts & Humanities, nine credit hours in the Social Sciences, and one course each in US Diversity and International Perspectives.¹⁰ This information is communicated to the public and students through the ISU web site and through its academic advising program.

In November 2020, the ISU Faculty Senate revised the student learning outcomes for the US Diversity requirement. Starting in AY 2022-23, US Diversity courses must meet at least three of these four learning outcomes:

- Identify the experiences and contributions of underrepresented or marginalized groups and how they have shaped the history and culture of the United States.
- Understand the analytical concepts of culture, ethnicity, race, gender, sexuality, and/or religion and be able to apply these concepts to an analysis of the United States.
- Analyze systemic oppression and personal prejudice and their impact on marginalized communities and the broader U.S. society.
- Evaluate important aspects of diversity, equity, and inclusion so they can live, work, and collaborate with others in the 21st century United States.¹¹

While no American History or American Government courses are required *per se*, they are popular offerings, enrolling about 800 students per year (300 in the two-semester American History sequence and 500 in American Government).¹²

In November 2020, Iowa State adopted a required syllabus statement affirming students' rights to free speech and academic freedom in the classroom.¹³ The Board of Regents has also implemented a required annual free speech training for all university employees and students.¹⁴

In addition, Student Government generously funds a vigorous University Lectures program, which sponsors dozens of speakers who address topical issues, many of which are political in nature. In election years, the Lectures program also sponsors candidate visits and forums. ISU faculty are generous in offering extra credit to students who attend and the ISU Lectures program has a system in place to "swipe" student ID cards to track attendance.

In Fall 2020, the Catt Center adapted Ask Every Student's Canvas module and publicized it to faculty. It was downloaded nearly 200 times, making it available to students across campus. Unfortunately, we do not know the disciplines or courses where the module was downloaded. Some informal feedback indicated that faculty in some fields were hesitant to download it because of the University's germaneness rule (see below). In 2021, the module was made available to faculty in advance of the local elections and the email announcement

¹⁰ Iowa State University General Education Program. <https://las.iastate.edu/students/academics/general-education/>.

¹¹ Iowa State Faculty Senate Docket 20-35. "US Diversity and International Perspectives Guidelines and Procedures." <https://www.facsen.iastate.edu/sites/default/files/uploads/20-21%20Docket%20Calendar/20-35%20US%20Diversity%20-%20Approved%2020210723.pdf>

¹² Data calculated by author from enrollment statistics available from Institutional Research.

¹³ "Free Expression and Academic Freedom Syllabus Statement: Frequently Asked Questions. January 2021. <https://www.provost.iastate.edu/policies/syllabus-statement-faq>.

¹⁴ Board of Regents, State of Iowa Board Policy Manual. "4.2 Freedom of Expression." <https://www.iowaregents.edu/plans-and-policies/board-policy-manual/42-freedom-of-expression>.

emphasized that the goal was to provide information to students, which could be done without offering extra credit or other inducements.

Also in Fall 2020, Dr. Kedrowski offered a voting engagement internship through the Political Science department in which six students enrolled for academic credit. She intends to offer the same opportunity to students in fall 2022.

- ✓ **Co-Curriculum:** As noted above, there are dozens of student organizations that focus on civic engagement from partisan, ideological, and/or issue-based perspectives; several dozen more are cultural or identity groups that overlap with the NSLVE demographics. Iowa State also has a ROTC program and active student military and veterans' groups. The NCAA has civic engagement as one of its priorities, including mandating "All Vote, No Play" on Election Day, and all fraternities and sororities are involved in philanthropic and civic caucuses. Taken together, these groups and activities indicate that civic engagement is a key part of the co-curricular program.

In addition, ISU has a commitment to sending interested students, faculty, and staff to the National Conference on Race and Ethnicity in American Higher Education (NCORE) each year and hosts a local version of this conference, ISCORE, on campus each year, which is open to all ISU students, faculty, and staff. In March 2022, Dr. Kedrowski will present 2020 NSLVE data at the conference, which includes breakdowns by race and ethnicity for the first time.

- ✓ **Voting FAQs Site:** The Catt Center created and maintain a student voting FAQs¹⁵ site that is more comprehensive than what is offered elsewhere. It includes details about Iowa voting law, including specifics for absentee voting and voting in Ames; links to the Campus Vote Project's student guides for the 50 states and the District of Columbia; and links to the election offices for US territories.
- ✓ **Administrative Actions to Support Student Voting:** Furthermore, the University has taken several steps recently to help students exercise their right to vote in 2020 and 2021. These included:
 - Distributing voter registration and absentee ballot forms at the University's ID Office, in residence halls, and Greek houses;
 - Hosting early (absentee in person) voting on campus;
 - Adding a screen to the student portal, Access Plus, which lists the student's local address. This screen or printout is accepted by poll workers as proof of address;
 - Adding an expiration date to student IDs so they can be used as proof of identification at the polls;
 - Housing election day polling places on campus for several precincts.
- ✓ **Vote Everywhere and Financial Resources:** Iowa State University has a relationship with the Andrew Goodman Foundation, which funds \$1000 per year to support voter engagement activities. It also provides the my.VoteEverywhere portal that provides students with information about voting and elections.

¹⁵ Voting FAQs for College Students. <https://cattcenter.iastate.edu/voting-faqs-for-college-students/>.

- ✓ **Permission to Use “Cyclones Vote:”** The University has a number of protected marks and logos, including the word “Cyclones.” Previously, the Trademark Office had denied the Vote Everywhere student club permission to use “Cyclones Vote” and the “#cyclonesvote” hashtag. In January 2022, the Catt Center secured permission to use this phrase and hash tags.
- ✓ **External Factors Supporting Voter Engagement:** Iowa State enjoys a number of external factors that help encourage student voting engagement. They include:
 - An active local chapter of the League of Women Voters, which provides assistance with voter registration activities and maintains Vote411, a nonpartisan site with information about candidates. In 2020, the League took the lead on outreach to private apartment management companies to distribute information to students living off campus.
 - National advocacy groups including the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge, the Andrew Goodman Foundation, Ask Every Student, the Big XII Voting Challenge, the Civic Engagement Section of the American Political Science Association, the Faculty Network for Student Voting Rights, the Iowa Voting Coalition, and the Voter Friendly Campus Initiative.
 - Iowa’s nonpartisan commission draws its congressional and legislative district lines, which minimizes partisan gerrymandering. Consequently, the state has many competitive districts, including three of the four US House districts;
 - Several statewide races on the ballot, including vigorous contested races for Governor and US Senate; and
 - Iowa’s voting law, which allows same day registration.

Internal and External Barriers to Success:

- ✓ **Student Engagement:** ISU participates in the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), which queries college freshmen and seniors on their collegiate experiences. The 2020 NSSE administration, the most recent available, found that ISU seniors scored below their peers at other American Association of Universities (AAU) and institutions that share its Carnegie Classification¹⁶ on questions broadly related to civic engagement (see Table 2). These results imply that many ISU students are not engaged in the types of vigorous debate and exposure to different points of view that train for a lifetime of civic engagement. Many of the gaps are significant. A notable, and encouraging, exception is the percentage of seniors who had discussions with people with different political views, which is substantially higher than the AAU average.

¹⁶ Iowa State’s Carnegie Classification is R1 – Doctoral, Very High Research Activity.

Table 2: ISU 2016 NSSE Results Related to Civic Education/Engagement¹⁷

NSSE Question	ISU Senior Responses (%)	Peer Institution Comparisons	
		AAU (%)	Carnegie Class (%)
Under “Reflective and Integrative Learning”			
Connected your learning to societal problems or issues	50*	-6	-7
Included diverse perspectives (political, religious, racial/ethnic, gender, etc.) in course discussions or assignments	40*	-8	-9
Learned something that changed the way you understand an issue or concept	70*	-3	-2
Under “Discussions with Diverse Others” (“Had discussions with...”)			
People from a race or ethnicity other than your own	67*	-9	-9
People from an economic background other than your own	71*	-2	-5
People with religious beliefs other than your own	68*	-4	-4
People with political views other than your own	70*	11	2
Under “Campus Environment” (“How much did the institution emphasize...”)			
Encouraging contact among students from different backgrounds (socioeconomically, racial/ethnic, religious, etc.)	51**	5	-5
Attending events that address important social, economic, or political issues	42**	2	1

*Percentage who responded “often” or “very often.”

**Percentage who responded “very much” or “quite a bit.”

- ✓ **Disparities in Student Voter Turnout:** Iowa State’s NSLVE reports show rather typical variations between student groups’ voter turnout. For instance, female students have higher voter turnout than male students. Upper-level students (Sophomores, Juniors and Seniors) vote at higher rates than first-year students (70-71% vs 67%). Racial and ethnic minorities vote at lower rates than their white peers (ranging from 58% to 75%); and STEM students have lower turnout rates than students in the Humanities and Social Sciences (ranging from 53% to 95%).¹⁸

Yet, several of these differences are especially worrisome. First, Iowa State’s student body is 55% male, compared to 44% nationally.¹⁹ Second, STEM majors are the most popular on campus. Just two academic colleges, Agriculture and Life Sciences and Engineering, enroll a combined 10,000 students, plus another 2,600 are found in STEM fields in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. Altogether, STEM students comprise nearly half the entire student body.²⁰ Lower voter turnout rates among men and among STEM majors (understanding these two groups are not exclusive of each other) depresses Iowa State’s overall turnout. The lower voter turnout among racial/ethnic minorities is also a cause for concern and will be a focus of student voter engagement efforts.

¹⁷ National Survey of Student Engagement. “NSSE 2020 Engagement Indicators.”

[https://www.ir.iastate.edu/sites/default/files/PDF's/NSSE20%20Engagement%20Indicators%20\(ISU\).pdf](https://www.ir.iastate.edu/sites/default/files/PDF's/NSSE20%20Engagement%20Indicators%20(ISU).pdf).

¹⁸Iowa State 2020 NSLVE Report.

¹⁹ Iowa State 2021-22 Fact book. <https://www.ir.iastate.edu/factbook/current/enrollment>, and Jon Marcus, “The Degrees of Separation Between Genders in College Keep Growing. *The Washington Post*. October 27, 2019.

https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/education/the-degrees-of-separation-between-the-genders-in-college-keeps-growing/2019/10/25/8b2e5094-f2ab-11e9-89eb-ec56cd414732_story.html.

²⁰ Iowa State 2021-22 Fact Book.

- ✓ **Unfriendly University Policies:** Iowa State has several university policies that complicate student voting engagement efforts. For instance, the ISU Faculty Handbook requires that classroom discussions be germane, specifically stating, “In order to be germane, the material must be relevant to the scholarly subject matter and must be presented by appropriate means.”²¹ The Provost’s current guidance to faculty cautions against “...voter registration drives, discussions of candidates, or other activities that may be perceived as partisan in nature without providing similar opportunities for members of the campus community with other viewpoints”²²

Second, in 2021, the Iowa State Legislature passed House File 802, which prohibits including various “specific defined concepts,” such as “one race or sex is inherently superior to another race or sex” in mandatory trainings. The University Counsel has interpreted this legislation to apply to required coursework when there is only one section of a required course or multiple sections of a required course that uses a standardized curriculum.²³

Third, many administrators were concerned that any voter engagement activities might be perceived as partisan and in the past were reluctant to endorse communications to students on the subject.

Taken together, these policies have a dampening effect on efforts to engage faculty in student voter engagement efforts. Some faculty may avoid discussing voting or current affairs altogether rather than risk student complaints, administrative sanctions, or negative publicity from or for the institution.

Consequently, the coalition’s leadership avoids associations with voter engagement groups that have an ideological bent, has developed a neutrality statement to use in campus communications, and encourages faculty to download the Canvas module as an optional resource rather than integrated into the course.

In late 2020, Dr. Kedrowski also asked the Provost to consider making Election Day an “assignment and exam free” day, akin to the policies for Prep Week (the last week of classes before exams) and to encourage faculty to make voting an excused absence. There has been no response to date.

- ✓ **Campus Climate:** Nearly three-quarters (72.5%) of the Iowa State student body identifies as non-Hispanic white. Students of color, including Latinx, African American, Asian, Native American, and Native Hawaiian, comprise about 16% of the student body.²⁴ Consequently,

²¹ Iowa State Faculty Handbook, Section 7.2.1.2 “Scholarly Discourse and Germaneness.”

<https://www.facsen.iastate.edu/sites/default/files/docket/2005/S05-33FHChap7-8-1.pdf>.

²² Office of the Provost, ND. “Separating Personal and Institutional Advocacy.”

<https://www.provost.iastate.edu/policies/separating-personal-and-institutional-political-advocacy>.

²³ “FAQ: Iowa House File 802—Requirements Related to Racism or Sexism Training at Public Postsecondary Institutions.” August 5, 2021. <https://www.provost.iastate.edu/policies/iowa-house-file-802---requirements-related-to-racism-and-sexism-trainings>.

²⁴ 2021-22 Iowa State Fact Book.

the Iowa State student body is considerably more diverse than the population of Iowa, which is 85% non-Hispanic white.²⁵

At the same time, students of color have long asserted that they confront a hostile climate on campus. These concerns have been reinforced by racist incidents on campus in recent years.²⁶ Dealing with these incidents continues to consume the student affairs staff and remains an issue on campus.

- ✓ **Changes to Iowa’s Voting Law:** In March 2021, Governor Kim Reynolds signed a voting bill into law that includes several provisions that could negatively impact college students’ right to vote. First, the law has shortened the pre-registration period and the period to request an absentee ballot. Second, absentee ballots now have an “arrive by” Election Day deadline rather than an Election Day postmark deadline. Third, only the voter or immediate family members can return a completed absentee ballot to the county auditor in person, meaning that students cannot have friends deliver completed ballots on their behalf. Fourth, counties may have only one ballot drop box, a particular challenge for Story County, where the county seat (Nevada, IA) is not the largest city (Ames). By implication, the Story County Auditor cannot place a drop box on campus unless it is the county’s only drop box location. Fifth, the hours that polls are open on Election Day was reduced by one hour, from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. rather than 7 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Lastly, and potentially the most significant barrier, county auditors may no longer take the initiative to set up early voting (absentee in person) locations at their own discretion. Instead, they must receive a resident’s petition signed by 100 registered voters to do so. This will probably reduce the number of days and locations for early voting (absentee in person) on campus.²⁷

- ✓ **COVID-19 Pandemic:** The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic continues to pose challenges for student voter engagement efforts. First, planning in-person events is tricky, given the unpredictable nature of the pandemic and the fact that the University has neither a mask mandate nor a vaccine mandate. Second, safe practices, such as social distancing, also limit the number of polling locations or early (absentee in-person) locations on or near campus. Third, attendance at in-person, on-campus events such as lectures and forums has declined precipitously from pre-COVID years. While the reasons for this are unknown, anecdotal feedback indicates that COVID concerns or a general preference for virtual events are contributing factors.
- ✓ **Lack of Financial Resources:** In 2020, Iowa State received more support from the Andrew Goodman Foundation, unexpected assistance from the Campus Election Engagement Project (CEEP), and a sizable grant from Ask Every Student. Altogether, these sources funded student stipends and/or paid for advertisements in the ISU Daily and CyRide buses and all

²⁵ United States Census Bureau Quick Facts, Iowa. July 1, 2021. <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/IA>.

²⁶ Iowa State Campus Climate web site. <https://www.campusclimate.iastate.edu/>

²⁷ Stephen Gruber-Miller. “Iowa’s voting laws have changed. Here’s what you need to know before you vote.” *Des Moines Register*. September 8, 2021. <https://www.desmoinesregister.com/story/news/politics/2021/09/07/iowas-election-laws-changed-year-what-know-before-you-vote-absentee-ballot-early-voting-kim-reynolds/5590731001/>.

student emails. In 2021, annual support from the Andrew Goodman Foundation was cut to \$1,000 from \$3,000 and ISU's application for support from Ask Every Student was denied. Efforts to secure support from donors have not been successful to date. In 2021, the Catt Center covered the cost of all student emails (\$26 each for ten emails) and other outreach was limited to free media. In 2021-22, the Catt Center and the Political Science department are paying stipends to students involved in the Innovation Sprint. However, this is not sustainable and 2022 will require more resources.

Additional Resources to Help Ensure Success: The Iowa State team has identified the following resources that will help it succeed in its voter registration and engagement efforts:

- ✓ **Financial Support:** The coalition will require financial resources to fund advertisements and student stipends in the fall. The Catt Center will reapply for an Ask Every Student Grant, look for on-campus partners, continue to pursue private donations and grants, and seek other funding opportunities.
- ✓ **More Robust Administrative Support:** Dr. Kedrowski is building relationships with key personnel to adjust messaging to faculty and to otherwise communicate that student voting engagement is an institutional priority.
- ✓ **Greater Exposure for Voter Engagement Efforts:** The Catt Center strives to be the leading office on voter engagement efforts. However, communicating this to the campus community in a large, decentralized institution is a challenge and an ongoing process.

GOALS

The Iowa State team has identified several long-term and short-term goals for its student voter engagement efforts:

Long-Term Goals:

- ✓ By 2026, the ISU student voter registration rate will reach full voter registration (90-100% of eligible students);
- ✓ By the 2028 presidential election, Iowa State voter turnout will reach 80%;
- ✓ By the 2026 midterm election, the Iowa State student voter turnout rate will reach 60%.
- ✓ By 2028, turnout gaps between STEM and non-STEM students and between racial and ethnic groups will be eliminated.

Short-Term Goals:

- ✓ By 2024, Iowa State's student voter engagement coalition will be institutionalized and self-sustaining.
- ✓ By 2022, 15% of the members of the voting coalition will represent racial and ethnic minorities.
- ✓ By 2022 the ISU voting coalition will have representation from each academic college, student affairs, ROTC, and athletics.
- ✓ ISU's 2022 voter registration rate will be 85% and its voter turnout rate will be 50%.

- ✓ The gap in voter turnout between racial minority groups and white students will be no more than 10 percentage points in 2022.
- ✓ The gap in voter turnout between STEM and non-STEM fields will be no more than 10 percentage points in 2022.
- ✓ The Catt Center will raise \$15,000 from grants or donors to support nonpartisan student voter engagement.

STRATEGY

Short-Term Strategies: The Iowa State team will pursue the following strategies to Ask Every Student to vote in the upcoming election and to maximize student voter engagement in 2022:

- ✓ **Student Leadership:** The Political Science department will offer a student voting internship for academic credit and, if resources are available, will offer stipends to student voting ambassadors who will lead the student voting engagement efforts. This effort will include recruiting, training, and managing voting champions, mass media and social media outreach, messaging, and more.
- ✓ **“Cyclones Vote” and “#CyclonesVote:”** The coalition will secure permission to use “Cyclones Vote” and “#CyclonesVote” from the University Trademark Office. *Goal Accomplished, January 2022.*
- ✓ **Mass Emails:** The Catt Center has developed and will send a series of all-student emails that provide information about voter registration, absentee voting, deadline reminders, upcoming early voting opportunities, and information on candidates. These emails comply with, and exceed, the federal mandate to provide such information to all students. *(Evaluation Measure: open and click through statistics provided by IT. Target: 30% open rate).*

In addition, the Catt Center will send out tailored information to the Post Doc association and the Graduate and Professional Student Senate for distribution to those populations.

- ✓ **Faculty Communications:**
 - Dr. Kedrowski will update and advertise the Ask Every Student Canvas Module to all faculty. This will put voter information in front of students’ eyeballs, irrespective of major *(Evaluation Measure: Number of canvas module downloads. Target: 210 downloads.)*
 - Dr. Kedrowski will collaborate with the Provost’s office and the Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT) to develop guidance on how faculty can promote student voter engagement within the parameters of University rules and state law. This will be a list of “can dos” to counter the focus today on the “don’t dos” and include a neutrality statement *(Evaluation Measure: Inclusion in the regular CELT newsletter)*.
 - The Catt Center will distribute its “Vote” badge linked to the Voting FAQs page that can be added to one’s email signature block. *(Evaluation Measure: Badge downloads. Target: 50)*

✓ **Mass Media and Social Media Strategies:**

- **Campus Wide Messaging:** In addition to the campus-wide emails, the ISU team will engage in campus-wide messaging through communications professionals; newsletters such as *Inside Iowa State* and the student announcements portal; *Iowa State Daily* stories; and, if funding permits, purchased advertising in the *Daily* and on CyRide buses. These strategies received positive feedback in 2020. (Evaluation Measure: number of messages and ads. Target: Five (5) campus-wide messages).
 - **Targeted Messaging to Low-Turnout Groups:** The voting ambassadors will develop messages tailored to students in low-turnout majors (i.e., “Engineer your Future: Vote” and “Voting: It’s Your Business”) and low-turnout demographic groups. They will include video messages distributed to faculty for sharing on Canvas or in required courses. All academic deans have agreed to record short videos to share with students in their colleagues. These messages will also include graphics for social media, monitors, and newsletters with information about turnout in their major or groups. In addition, the voting ambassadors will work with Science Rising to develop peer-to-peer messages for STEM students. Messaging include information about registration, voting, and voter education resources (Evaluation Measure: Number of messages distributed. Target: 10 messages.)
 - **Dinner Announcements:** The voting ambassadors will work with sororities and fraternities to include information about voter registration and voting during the evening dinner announcements. (Evaluation Measure: Number of dinner announcements made. Target: 30 announcements made in various Greek houses).
- ✓ **ISCORE Presentation:** In March 2022, Dr. Kedrowski will present the NSLVE data at the Iowa State Conference on Race and Ethnicity (ISCORE), with a focus on the racial/ethnic breakdowns. This presentation will both publicize NSLVE results and be a means to recruit people to the coalition and to brainstorm for strategies to reach these students (Evaluation Measure: Number of ideas for reaching under-represented groups. Target: Five (5) ideas).
- ✓ **Linking Voting FAQs on Web Pages:** The voting ambassadors and champions will look for “resources for current students” tabs on various websites (with a focus on academics, student affairs, and student organizations), and reach out to departments to add Voting FAQs to the list with a link directing to the FAQs maintained by the Catt Center (Evaluation Measure: Number of links added and tracking statistics on Voting FAQ web page. Target: 30 links added).
- ✓ **Engaging Athletics:** In 2020, Head Football Coach Matt Campbell produced a video encouraging Iowans to vote for the Secretary of State’s Office. The ISU team will look

for appropriate means to engage with the Athletics department, including publicizing “All Vote, No Play” on Election Day. Possibilities include 100% team voting challenges, linking to and promoting messages produced for the Secretary of State, voter registration drive at a football game, or other collaborations. (Evaluation Measure: Activities with athletic department. Target: One (1) activity).

- ✓ **Distribution of Voter Registration and Absentee Ballot Request Forms:** The voting ambassadors and champions will distribute voter registration and absentee ballot request forms campus-wide, with literature distributed to residence halls; fraternity and sorority houses; and high-traffic areas such as the Memorial Union, Parks Library, university gyms, Thielen Health Center, food pantry, athletics department, and music building. (Evaluation Measure: Number of forms distributed. Target: 2,000 forms distributed).
- ✓ **Voter Registration Drives:** The voting ambassadors and champions will host at least three in-person voter registration drives during the fall semester between September 1 and October 15. (Evaluation Measure: Number of days for tabling. Target: Three (3) tabling days).
- ✓ **Encourage Faculty to Make Election Day a No Exam/No Major Assignment Day:** The team will work with the Faculty Senate, Student Government, and the Graduate and Professional Student Association to adopt resolutions encourage faculty to refrain from scheduling exams or major assignments on Election Day to encourage students to vote. (Evaluation Measure: Resolutions passed. Target: Three (3) resolutions).
- ✓ **Outreach to Private Property Management Corporations:** Most Iowa State students live off-campus in apartments or rental homes. The League of Women Voters will distribute information to apartment property management companies to distribute information about registration and voting via emails to residents, to link to the Story County Auditor site, and/or other means. (Evaluation Measure: Number of companies that agree. Target: Five (5) companies).
- ✓ **Secure On-Campus Early Voting Locations:** The League of Women Voters will secure signatures to secure an early voting (absentee in person) location on campus for at least two days. (Evaluation Measure: Early voting location secured. Target: Two (2) days).
- ✓ **Election-Related Campus and Community Programming:** Various campus organizations produce programming in election years, including lectures on current issues and candidate appearances and forums. At a minimum, fall 2022 will include a Constitution Day Lecture hosted by the University Lectures Program, the Manatt-Phelps Lecture in Political Science, and candidate forums sponsored by the League of Women Voters. Additional events are likely to be held as well. (Evaluation Measure: attendance statistics from University Lectures card swipes and/or log ins during virtual events)

Engaging International Students, Immigrants, and Students Under Age 18: While international students, immigrants who are not nationalized, and students under age 18 are not

eligible to vote, they can participate in all election-related programming, complete the Canvas module to learn about Iowa voting law, serve as voting ambassadors, and as athletes enjoy NCAA’s “All Vote, No Play” observation.

Civic Holidays: The ISU team will make a special effort to coordinate with two civic holidays, National Voter Registration Day and National Voter Education Week. The first is a perfect opportunity to schedule a voter registration drive. The second is a great opportunity to push out messages through the communications professionals on campus.

Budget: An approximate budget for these activities is found in Table 3.

Table 3: Expenses for 2022 Voting Outreach:

Requested Item	Cost (\$)
Stipends for six voting ambassadors (\$500 each)	3,000
Fringe benefits (at 0.6%)	18
CyRide Tail Ads for two months (\$250 per bus, 10 busses)	5,000
Bus Tail Ads Production and Mounting costs (\$100 per bus, 10 busses)	1,000
Digital ads on Orange Circulator busses (1 month)	1,000
<i>Iowa State Daily</i> ads (Giant Header \$20 day * five days plus lay out)	150
Mass emails (2 to faculty and staff; 8 to students. \$26 each)	260
“#CyclonesVote” stickers and other giveaways	1,000
Subtotal	11,428
Indirect costs (33% for “other sponsored activities”)	3,372
Total	15,200

Long-Term Strategy:

To achieve its long-term goal of fostering student involvement, ISU needs to create a culture of civic engagement that includes vigorous advocacy of student voter engagement. This will require the active participation of academic programs and student life.

Key to this effort will be to publicize NSLVE report findings, normalize civic engagement, and allay concerns that discussing voting and public affairs is controversial or inappropriate. Moreover, the University is developing its next strategic plan, which provides an opportunity to highlight the University’s civic mission and responsibility to create responsible citizens.

This long-term strategy is dependent upon securing the buy-in of University leadership. To date, Dr. Kedrowski has found an important ally in President Wintersteen. She is also building trust with other key stakeholders, including the University Counsel’s Office, the Provost’s Office, and the Student Innovation Center. Next up is securing the active collaboration of the Vice President of Student Affairs and the Vice President of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

NSLVE

NSLVE results are woven throughout this report. As you can see, Iowa State's voter engagement efforts have contributed to steady increases in voter registration and voter turnout in presidential and midterm election years. The demographic breakdowns, specifically between STEM and non-STEM students and within racial and ethnic groups, is at the center of voter engagement messaging and recruitment of student organizations and offices.

NSLVE results have been shared widely on campus and to the University's faculty leaders and administrators, including the President's Council and the Faculty Senate. As noted above, NSLVE will be the focus of Dr. Kedrowski's ISCORE presentation in March 2022, which is open to the entire campus community.

REPORTING

This plan was developed through a collaborative effort involving the Innovation Spring team (six students), the chair of the Political Science department, and other key stakeholders. This plan will be used as the "to do" list for the voting ambassadors and champions and members of the coalition. As the 2020 Action Plan was used as the basis for this 2022 plan, 2022 will inform 2024's goals and strategies, and so on.

The Action Plan will be posted on the Catt Center website, shared with the ISU team, and posted on ALL IN and Voter Friendly Campus Initiative websites.

EVALUATION

Looking Back at 2020: Looking back at the 2020 action plan and results, we see some promising indications that ISU is building its civic ethos. Among our achievements:

- ✓ More seniors report to NSSE that they had experiences with people of different backgrounds and diverse perspectives during their ISU careers; the gaps between ISU students and AAU and Carnegie class institutions narrowed.
- ✓ ISU seniors surpass AAU and Carnegie class NSSE averages on having discussions with people with different political perspectives.
- ✓ The 2020 Action Plan set a long-term voter turnout goal of 60% for the 2028 presidential election. The 2020 voter turnout rate (72.9%) far surpassed this goal. ISU also surpassed its long-term goals for voter registration. The 2022 goals have been adjusted upward to reflect this difference.
- ✓ Received recognition for Best Action Plan from the Big XII Voting Challenge and the Iowa Voting Challenge.

Evaluation metrics and targets are listed above for each strategy for 2022. In addition, NSSE and NSLVE will continue to be key assessment metrics for the overall success of ISU's efforts. Evaluations will be summarized in the 2024 action plan and used to develop that strategy as well as shared with the coalition and campus leadership.