



Voter Engagement Action Plan Draft May 2022

I | Executive Summary

The Lasell University Campus Voter Engagement Action Plan was developed by members of the Lasell Votes Initiative. Lasell Votes is a nonpartisan initiative created to support the development of democratic participation as a core value of Lasell University through strengthening civic learning, political engagement, and voter participation. Though Lasell University has a rich history of civic engagement and community service, Lasell Votes is the first initiative to formalize an institution-wide structure to support student voter engagement.

This action plan details Lasell's plan for the 2022 midterm election cycle to increase civic participation and voter engagement. The strategy centers students and seeks to inspire and bridge efforts across Lasell. The plan will be implemented during the 2022-2023 academic year. Using available campus resources, the Lasell Votes initiative will work in collaboration and partnership with campus and community stakeholders to promote and support student's electoral engagement. This plan acts as a framework and guide for initiative efforts and actions towards utilizing best practices and creative ways to engage students in the electoral process, improving student voter registration and turnout rates, and integrating civic learning and action, as well as democratic engagement, throughout the institution. The longer-term objectives will set the foundation for integration into the University's institutional multi-year strategic plans.

II | Leadership

The Lasell Votes Steering Committee is comprised of two staff and three students. This steering committee organizes and implements voter outreach and education programming and voter registration services, as well as develops collaboration opportunities on and off campus. Additionally, they manage the Lasell Votes email account, where they assist individual students with any questions and concerns about registration and voting. The committee works with the campus partners and off-campus partners on events and resource building.

Lasell Votes Steering Committee

Anna Sarneso, Library Director

TD Byrd Hughes, Associate Director of the Center for Community-Based Learning

Michael Woo, Class of 2023, Lasell Votes Chair & Student Government President

Sophia Couto, Class of 2024, Lasell Votes Ambassador and Events Manager

Role Currently Open, Lasell Votes Graphic Designer

Campus Partners

Athletics Department | Campus Activities Board | Counseling Center | Curricular Innovation | Mailroom | Marketing & Communications Department | Student Government Association | Lasell Village | Office of Institutional Research | Office of the President | Office of the Provost | Office of



the Registrar | Office of Residential Life | Office of Student Activities and Orientation | Student Government Association | The Nancy Lawson Donahue '49 Institute for Ethics, Diversity, and Inclusion | The RoseMary B. Fuss Teaching & Learning Center

Community Partners

Boston Votes Coalition | League of Women Voters Newton | Newton Elections Department

National Partners/Resources

ALL IN | Ask Every Student | Civic Influencers | Institute for Democracy & Higher Education (IDHE) | Faculty for Student Voting Rights, an initiative of Scholars Strategy Network | Students Learn Students Vote (SLSV) | Voter Friendly Campus (VFC)

Succession Planning

All the Lasell Votes assets are compiled in a single location and are accessible to all steering committee members as well as the Offices of the President and Provost. This ensures that the files will remain available and accessible as students enter and exit the initiative and should there be any transitions amongst the involved staff.

III | Commitment

We are committed to encouraging and supporting an interest in and action towards democratic engagement. Lasell University joined the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge in October 2019 and submitted a statement of interest for the Voter Friendly Campus designation in March 2020. Our President signed the Higher Education Presidents' Commitment to Full Student Voter Participation in April 2020.

Civic and Community Engagement (CCE) is a primary component of the University's Core Curriculum. To hold true to the interdisciplinary spirit of the Core Curriculum, this CCE outcome is interwoven throughout many courses and experiences for our students. Indeed, no specific, stand-alone course is dedicated to developing this outcome. Instead, through common activities, readings, and assignments in various disciplines and at various stages in their education, students have multiple opportunities to participate in civic engagement.

IV | Landscape

Lasell University Mission Statement: We immerse students in experiential and collaborative learning that fosters lifelong intellectual exploration, social responsibility, and professional growth.

Lasell Votes Mission Statement: Lasell Votes is a nonpartisan initiative that aims to support the development of democratic participation as a core value of Lasell University through strengthening civic learning, political engagement, and voter participation.

Founded in 1851, Lasell University is a private university located in Newton, Massachusetts that offers more than 60 undergraduate and graduate degrees through a curriculum of connected



learning across our five academic schools. Our all-ages campus includes a daycare (the Barn), Rockwell Preschool, and Lasell Village, a senior living community focused on lifelong learning.

The values we hold that guide our daily decision making are:

- Student focus
- Integrity, honesty, and ethical decision making
- Equity, inclusion, and intercultural competence
- Empathy, respect, and kindness

Lasell University's core curriculum, required of all students contains multiple requirements linked to civic engagement including:

- Articulate an informed understanding of the 'common good'
- Distinguish among civic engagement, justice, and service
- Identify resources that can be tapped to address societal challenges

The institution has an enduring commitment to civic engagement that can be seen across our illustrative history. From our earliest days, as the Lasell Seminary for Young Women, students held mock elections, despite that, as 18-year-old women, the students were excluded from voting in the actual elections. In the early 20th century, students led a vibrant Suffragette society that worked to change that, and then in the 1970's they led an active campaign in support of the 26th amendment to lower the voting age to 18. Since that time, Lasell students have been actively engaged in local and national politics, committed to their society and country. More information on institutional efforts between 2016 – 2020 can be found in Lasell's 2020 ALL IN Action Plan.

Lasell University has a long-standing commitment to active citizenship in our local, state, national, and global community. On campus, this work is supported by the Center for Community Based Learning (CCBL). The CCBL provides support and opportunities for students, faculty, and staff to engage with community organizations on mutually beneficial projects. Lasell students participate in one-time community service events as well as long-term continuous projects.

On campus, The Donahue Institute for Ethics, Diversity and Inclusion promotes social justice and global consciousness. The Donahue Institute fosters community and discourse on diversity through a wide range of events including lectures, discussion forums, films, theatre, and more. By promoting diversity and ethics on campus, the Donahue Institute fosters cross-cultural awareness and educates students to the issues faced by minority communities throughout the country and world.

In academic year 2021-2022, we had a total student body of 1,743, with 1,294 undergraduates and 449 graduate students. Our undergraduate population represented 24 states and 6 countries, with 59% of our students being from in state (primarily the New England region) and 41% from out of state. Our graduate population represented 32 states and 14 countries, with 61% being from in state and 39% from out of state.



Campus Diversity was as follows

Undergraduate Student Population - Fall 2021

Race	Percentage	Race	Percentage
Asian	3.25%	Two or More Races	3.40%
Hispanic/Latino	11.82%	American Indian or Alaska Native	0.08%
International Students	1.85%	Black or African American	9.97%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0.00%		
White	65.30%	Race and ethnicity unknown	4.33%

Graduate Student Population - Fall 2021

Race	Percentage	Race	Percentage
Asian	2.90%	Two or More Races	2.67%
Hispanic/Latino	4.90%	American Indian or Alaska Native	0.22%
International Students	6.90%	Black or African American	10.69%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0%		
White	59.02%	Race and ethnicity unknown	12.69%

Source: Lasell University Website, Facts and Figures – Our Students

We hope to continue the positive uptrend in the 2022 election, especially with the respect and trust established through the Lasell Votes Initiative. We were approved by senior leadership to work with ALL IN and Civic Nation to get a customized voter registration portal and are excited about incorporating this tool into our efforts. We hope to further engage faculty and more students in this voter and civic engagement work.



V | Goals

The three main goals of Lasell Votes are:

- to utilize best practices and creative formats to engage students in the electoral process
- to continually improve student voter registration and turnout rates (informed by the institution's NSLVE data)
- to institutionalize civic learning and action, as well as democratic engagement, throughout the institution

Short-Term Goals

- Increase eligible student voter turnout rate 5 percentage points, moving from 39.7% in 2018 to at least 44.7% in 2022
- Fill the open graphic design steering committee role
- Increase engagement through events (registration drives, panels, educational events)

Long-Term Goals

- Recruit more students to be Lasell Votes Ambassadors
- Continue cross-campus collaborations to offer inclusive and diverse programming aimed at extending our reach across the student population
- Increase programming for non-election years
- Create engagement opportunities for students that are ineligible to vote
- Find a permanent home within the University's organizational structure, as well as a formal budget
- By 2024, increase voting rate to 70% for presidential elections and voter participation in 18 – 21 age range to 68% and in the 22-24 age range to 65%
- By 2026, increase voting rate to 50% for midterm elections
- Create open, inviting, and supportive campus climate and culture for civic learning and political engagement with multiple opportunities during and beyond elections

This action plan serves as a living document to be evaluated and updated on an annual basis.

VI | Strategy

Summer 2022

- Engage First Years and Push Registration
 - We hope to begin to integrate into first-year orientation, starting with the Class of 2026's orientation programs
 - Update internal LasellVotes site, including new customized registration portal
 - Send targeted emails with midterm election information to all students



Fall 2022

- Registration, Education, and Turn-out
 - Participate in Civic Holidays to build excitement and momentum
 - Provide voter engagement training to targeted student leader groups on campus, such as Resident Assistants (RAs), Peer Mentors, Athletic Team Captains, Club/Organizations Leaders, etc.
 - Integrate with pre-established campus touchpoints to reach wider audiences

Spring 2023

- Celebration and Preparation
 - Organize celebratory events to foster sense of campus pride
 - Begin conversations with leadership about institutional funding/budget
 - Assess action plan and update as necessary

VII | NSLVE

Our understanding of the Lasell student voting landscape began with an intentional review in 2019 of our campus specific data from the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) report.

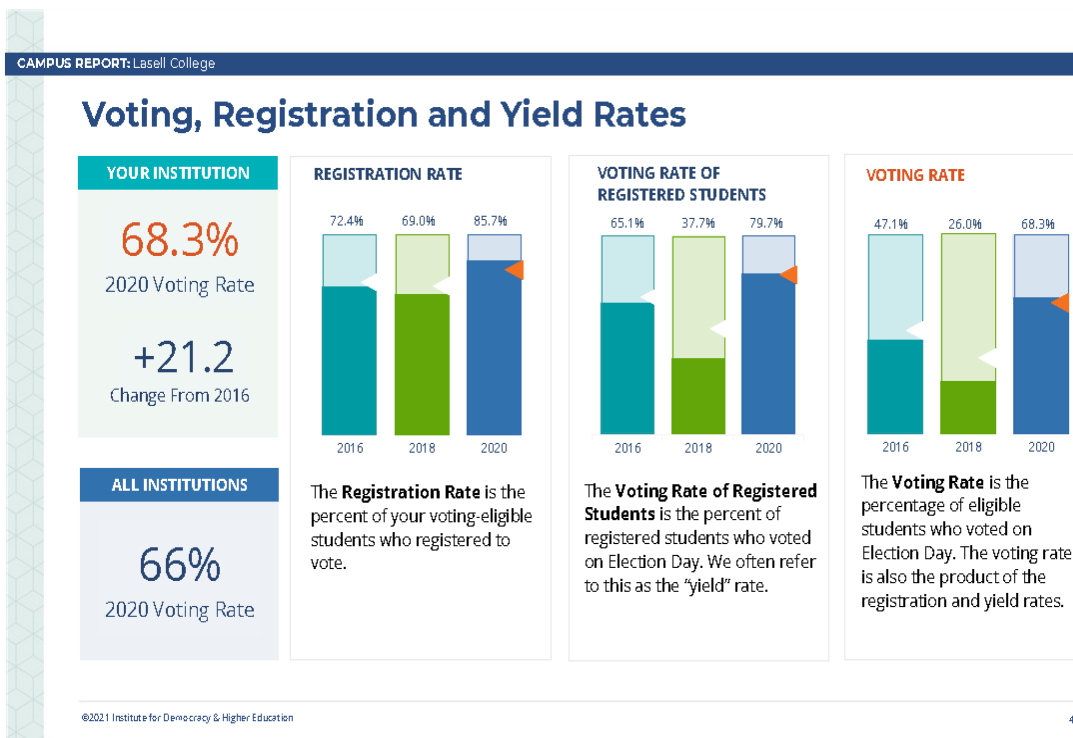
During our review in 2019, we found that our institution had traditionally seen voting rates just below the national average, with a much higher rate during Presidential Election years. In 2016, we had a 47.8% voter turnout, which was up 8.5% from the previous presidential election in 2012. Though we were just below the national average of 50.4% for all institutions, the numbers were boosted by the high turnout of students aged over 50, who are mostly our Lasell Village residents and are classified as part time students.

The same dynamic was observed with our 2018 midterm elections data, which had a much lower turnout with only 28.3% participation. While this was up 16% from the previous midterm election (2014), it was well below the national average for all institutions, which was 39.8%. Students aged over 50 had a 66.7% turnout, while students aged 18-21 only saw a turnout rate of 20.5%. We knew we had to become targeted and intentional with efforts to engage “traditional aged” students.

Our 2018 NSLVE data earned Lasell University a Bronze Seal from the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge. This recognition was used to ignite excitement around engagement efforts for the 2020 presidential election cycle. It also spurred our President to commit our campus to the Higher Education Presidents' Commitment to Full Student Voter Participation.

Though the COVID-19 pandemic posed obstacles to what we had planned for the 2020 election cycle, we adapted and persisted, resulting in a 68.3% overall voting rate, putting us slightly above the national average for all institutions. We subsequently earned a Silver Seal from ALL IN and received the Voter Friendly Campus Designation. This brought a lot of pride and excitement to our campus, and furthered brand recognition for the Lasell Votes initiative. It also helped us to learn how to effectively incorporate virtual components into our overall plan. We will utilize a hybrid outreach and engagement strategy to enhance accessibility and inclusiveness moving forward.

Lasell will continue to analyze NSLVE data and internal reports to help validate and guide our work. When the University receives the NSLVE Data, the Lasell Votes steering committee will meet with our Institutional Research Office to analyze the findings and determine how to best utilize the data to inform future actions. A presentation about the report will be given to the President, Provost, Senior Management Team, and Student Government Association. With input from these stakeholders, we will develop a strategy to utilize the data as a campus tool for further electoral engagement efforts. The report will be posted internally on the Lasell Votes intranet page and Canvas module. Externally, we will authorize our NSLVE report to be posted through ALL IN.



VIII Reporting

The Lasell Votes steering committee will present their findings annually to the President, Provost, and other members of the Senior Management Team of the University. This action plan will live within the Center for Community Based Learning (CCBL). It will be available on Canvas and the institution's internal intranet site. The Lasell Votes committee will work with the University's Communication and Marketing department to distribute the information externally when appropriate. Additionally, it will be available to the public on the All-In Campus Democracy Challenge website.



IX | Evaluation

Voter Engagement across Campus

- Number of students, faculty, and staff who volunteer with the initiative
- Number of campus partners who work with the initiative

Voter Registration

- Number of tabling events
- Number of students registering at events
- Using Customized Voter Portal data to track registration
- Using NSLVE data to see any rise in percentage of students registered

Voter Education

- Number of classroom visits each semester
- Number of election engagement related events
- Number of students in attendance at events

Voter Ballot Access

- Number of students who submit for an absentee ballot from outreach efforts

Voter Turnout

- Number of students who complete vote plan
- Number of students who vote early
- Using NSLVE data to see any rise in percentage of students voting
- Using data from a post-election survey

The Lasell Votes initiative will work to accomplish the goals outlined in this plan through collaboration with students, clubs/organizations, faculty, staff, administration, local government and national organizations to further the success of the efforts began with the 2020 election cycle. We are committed to supporting student participation in every election and to increase institutional support and student involvement in the Lasell Votes initiative.