



## Lehigh University 2024 Democratic Engagement Action Plan

### **Executive Summary:**

This nonpartisan democratic engagement action plan was developed by Lehigh University in Pennsylvania for the 2024 election. The purpose of this action plan is to increase nonpartisan democratic engagement and student voter registration, education, and turnout in the 2024 presidential election. The goals for Lehigh University for the 2024 election are to maintain or improve our voter turnout rates compared to 2018 and 2022 NSLVE data and promote opportunities for students to engage in learning about the political process.

### **Leadership:**

The Community Service Office is responsible for coordinating civic and democratic engagement efforts on behalf of Lehigh University, including the design and execution of our Action Plan. One of the Assistant Directors in the Community Service Office serves as the designated staff member to oversee this body of work, including serving as chair of the Civic & Democratic Engagement Core Team, advising subsequent workgroups, and maintaining partnerships between other offices, departments, clubs and organizations seeking to engage in this work.

### Civic Engagement Core Team

To implement this plan, the Community Service Office will create a Civic Engagement Core Team whose purpose is to educate and empower Lehigh University students to enact positive change through citizenship and social engagement. They will be tasked with developing the 2024 ALL-IN Action Plan. Additionally, the Core Team will operate as an advisory board, providing direction for coordinated synergism and support of strategic initiatives to increase civic learning and democratic engagement.

During the 2024 election cycle, Core Team will meet monthly to debrief on the outcomes of civic & voter engagement programming, review progress towards goals, and determine next steps around continued mobilization of civic learning and democratic engagement efforts.

Current composition of the Core Team includes:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organization/Department</b>	<b>Role</b>
Carolina Hernandez	Community Service Office	Assistant Dean & Director

Ashley Sciora	Community Service Office	Associate Director
McKenna Myers	Community Service Office	Assistant Director
Amber Brose	Student Political Action Committee	President
Ibtihal Gassem	Student Senate	Outreach Chair
Julie Wright	College Democrats	President
Sam Denison	College Democrats	Vice President
Arthur Pevzner	College Republicans	President
Ashley Lemmons	Division of Student Affairs	Associate Dean of Students
Enrique Rosado	Fraternity & Sorority Life	Assistant Director
Brian Fife	Political Science Department	Department Chair
Nick Christy	Student Engagement & Student Center Facilities	Associate Director
Tracey King	University Communications & Public Affairs	Associate Vice President of External Affairs

Our campus works with these following nonprofit partners: Campus Compact, NASPA, and APCA.

**Commitment:**

Lehigh’s mission statement is to advance learning through the integration of teaching, research, and service to others. Lehigh’s vision statement states that Lehigh prepares graduates to engage with the world and lead lives of meaning. We commit to:

- National and international research prominence
- Learning experiences grounded in fundamental, transferable skills across all discipline and in real world challenges
- Strategic risk-taking in the presence of opportunity and adversity
- Social, environmental, and economic sustainability
- Meaningful connection and partnership with alumni, supporters, and citizens around the globe
- A robust return on the investment in a Lehigh education
- A diverse, inclusive, and financially accessible environment

Lehigh’s core values (essential enduring tenets - a small set of timeless guiding principles that require no external justification; they have intrinsic value and importance):

- Integrity and honesty

- Equitable community
- Academic freedom
- Intellectual curiosity
- Collaboration
- Commitment to excellence
- Leadership

As the coordinating office for Lehigh’s civic engagement efforts, the Community Service Office’s mission is to further develop our students, faculty and staff as active citizens who value and contribute to their community by responding to community needs through meaningful action. We encourage students to prioritize thoughtful community engagement in their life and values. We aim to prioritize a just and equitable community through actions of all kinds: service, philanthropy, democratic engagement and civic learning.

Lehigh has become more engaged in civic and democratic engagement work, based on increased interest from the undergraduate student population. A group of motivated students petitioned the University in 2020 to cancel classes on Election Day to allow for more students to vote. University leadership supported the request, changing the academic calendar for the Fall 2021 semester to reflect Election Day as a day classes will not be held, but also called for student participation in a “Civic Engagement Day,” with opportunities for civic and democratic engagement throughout Election Day beyond the act of voting.

As this represents a newer space of engagement for the Lehigh community, we are working to coordinate and expand the programming offerings in this space over the upcoming years.

Lehigh University’s President, Joseph J. Helble, has signed the Higher Education Presidents’ Commitment.

**Lehigh University Landscape:**

Lehigh University is a private 4-year institution and joined the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge in 2018.

Our campus demographic and voting data:

Lehigh University has 7,692 students:

- In-state: 2,278
- Out-of-state: 4,419
- International: 995
- Demographic breakdown by race:
  - American Indian or Alaskan Native: 5
  - Asian: 721
  - Black or African American: 346
  - Hispanic of any race: 766
  - Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander: 6

- Race and ethnicity unknown: 188
- Two or more races: 273
- U.S. Nonresident: 995
- White: 4,392

Lehigh University has authorized NSLVE.

Our institution had a 2022 campus voting rate of 37.6%.  
 Our institution had a 2020 voter registration rate of 80.8%.

Our institution had a 2020 campus voting rate of 76.7%.  
 Our institution had a 2020 voter registration rate of 88.8%.

Our institution had a 2018 voter turnout rate of 39.0%.  
 Our institution had a 2018 voter registration rate of 81.6%.

Our institution has been recognized by ALL IN with the following seals: 2018 Silver, 2020 Gold, 2022 Silver.

**Goals:**

Our campus civic and democratic engagement goals are:

- Goal: Maintain or exceed student voter turnout rate compared to 2020 NSLVE data in 2024.
- Goal: Maintain or exceed student voter registration rate compared to 2020 NSLVE data in 2024.  
*Note: we are using the 2020 data as a benchmark so as to be comparing data between presidential election cycles.*
- Goal: Increase student voter turnout rate to 80% in 2024.
- Goal: Increase student voter registration rate to 90% in 2024.

**Strategy:**

Lehigh University will implement these strategies to increase nonpartisan democratic engagement and student voter participation.

Our civic and democratic engagement-based student groups, as well as the Community Service Office, have run numerous workshops during the fall semester to discuss the importance and impact of voting in elections. They have also organized tabling opportunities to promote voter registration.

Our Political Science department sends campus-wide communication regarding voter registration deadlines, information about absentee/mail-in ballot options, and reminders of Election Day and polling information.

Our University communications team has promoted voter registration and corresponding

election deadlines and reminders on our official social media platforms. Our student newspaper has run several articles about voter registration and how to evaluate candidates for political office, as well as any responses from candidates for interviews.

Several external groups have been present in public areas surrounding Lehigh's campus to encourage members of the campus community to register to vote.

### **Evaluation:**

We will evaluate our action plan in the following ways:

Our primary evaluation method will consist of evaluating our 2024 NSLVE data. We will be designating student employees in the Community Service Office to work with the Assistant Director to benchmark civic and democratic engagement efforts at other campuses to help build the infrastructure necessary to continue to support this body of work, beginning with more defined processes around voter registration and education.

### **Reporting:**

Our campus action plan will be posted on our campus page on ALL IN's website <https://allinchallenge.org/campuses/lehigh-university/>.

Our institution has given ALL IN permission to publish our NSLVE reports which are posted on our campus page on ALL IN's website.

Our campus action plan and NSLVE reports will be hosted on the Community Service Office website for public access. NSLVE data and updated action plans will be shared with the stakeholders listed under the leadership section and other members of the campus community as requested.