



## Lehigh University 2022 Democratic Engagement Action Plan

### **Executive Summary:**

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

### **Leadership:**

Our leadership team includes the following:

Ashley Sciora, Associate Director, Community Service Office  
Carolina Hernandez, Assistant Dean/Director, Community Service Office  
Nick Christy, Associate Director, Office of Student Engagement  
Aarsenio Perry, Assistant Dean/Director, Office of Student Engagement

Supporting activities through the 2022 midterm elections are being coordinated and executed by various offices/departments and student groups including:

- Community Service Office
- Office of Student Engagement
- Political Science Department
- Lehigh University Art Galleries
- Lehigh Votes
- Student Senate
- College Democrats
- College Republicans
- Lehigh's Student Political Action Coalition
- The Douglass Dialogues Club

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 7,394 students:

- In-state: 2,200
- Out-of-state: 4,189
- International: 1,005
- Demographic breakdown by race:

- Asian: 644
- Black or African American: 347
- Hispanic of any race: 675
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander: 4
- Race and ethnicity unknown: 185
- Two or more races: 249
- U.S. Nonresident: 1,005
- White: 4,279

Lehigh University has authorized NSLVE.

Our institution had a 2020 campus voting rate of 76.9%.  
 Our institution had a 2020 voter registration rate of 89.1%.

Our institution had a 2018 voter turnout rate of 39.1%.  
 Our institution had a 2018 voter registration rate of 81.8%.

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

**Goals:**

Our campus democratic engagement goals are:

- Goal: Maintain or exceed student voter turnout rate compared to 2018 NSLVE data in 2022.
- Goal: Maintain or exceed student voter registration rate compared to 2018 NSLVE data in 2022.
- 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 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.

Civic Engagement Day will be hosted with numerous workshops throughout the day including a rally, a College Democrats and College Republicans debate, and sessions on elections and methods for civic engagement in daily life.

**Evaluation:**

We will evaluate our action plan in the following ways:

Our primary evaluation method will consist of evaluating our 2022 NSLVE data. We will also be collecting information about student participation in Civic Engagement Day to guide strategies for future year-round programming and education efforts.

**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.