



# 2020 Voter Engagement Plan

## Mission of Manhattan College:

“Manhattan College is an independent Catholic institution of higher learning that embraces qualified men and women of all faiths, cultures, and traditions. The mission of Manhattan College is to provide a contemporary, person-centered educational experience that prepares graduates for lives of personal development, professional success, civic engagement, and service to their fellow human beings. The College pursues this mission through programs that integrate a broad liberal education with concentration in specific disciplines in the arts and sciences or with professional preparation in business, education and engineering.”

Manhattan College’s mission statement above, commits us to prepare graduates for lives of, among other things, civic engagement, and thus it is appropriate that the college encourage eligible students to participate in national elections. By offering both curricular and extra-curricular opportunities for students to learn about current issues and the 2020 election, and by facilitating access to registration, absentee ballots and polling sites, Manhattan College hopes to encourage our students to develop the habit of casting an informed vote. Our overall effort will be non-partisan in nature, but we also welcome the efforts of partisan student organizations.

In addition, Manhattan College wants to comply with the 1998 Federal Higher Education Act and the 2008 Higher Education Opportunity Act, which requires colleges and universities to make a good faith effort to distribute voter registration forms, or electronic access to voter registration forms, to all students in years of federal or gubernatorial elections, and to make such forms widely available to students.

## Development of a Plan:

The newly formed Voter Engagement Committee held a first meeting to begin making a plan for 2020. The first agenda item was to identify how to make our committee inclusive of the entire Manhattan College community. Who should we invite to see that all schools and divisions of the college, and all student organizations, are represented? We have made an open invitation to the entire campus, and will continue to do so. We’ve also identified particular people and organizations to invite, among them SWE and NYWEA, Study Abroad, Math Club, Honor Societies, BSU, Residence Life.

We reviewed our registration and turnout data for the past three federal elections, summarized below. While we were pleased that, in the two election cycles where we engaged in some deliberate efforts to increase participation, the 2016 presidential election, and the 2018 midterm election, we observed significant improvement in our students’ rates of participation, we aim to get closer to the turnout rate

for all institutions participating in the NSLVE study. It was noted by committee members that a significant number of Manhattan College students are not registered to vote, and that therefore we should focus some of our efforts on voter registration, but also that a significant number are registered but did not vote -- and therefore we want to also consider ways to encourage registered students to cast a vote. As a largely residential campus, we recognize the need to help students who are registered at their home address to get an absentee ballot.

	2012	2014	2016	2018
Registration rate	65.4%	54.5%	72.8%	53.9
Turnout of registered students	53.0	15.2	61.7	41.9
<b>Turnout rate of eligible students</b>	<b>34.7</b>	<b>8.3</b>	<b>44.9</b>	<b>22.5</b>
Turnout rate at all institutions	46.9	18.8	50.4	39.1

### Goals:

- Create opportunities for Manhattan College students to learn about the election so that they can make informed decisions about their own participation
- Create easy access to information on registration, applying for an absentee ballot, and voting
- Raise registration rate of Manhattan College students to 82%
- Raise turnout rate of registered students to 70%
- Raise turnout rate of eligible students to 57%

### Strategy:

The Voter Engagement Committee will encourage various schools, departments, divisions and clubs in the Manhattan College community to plan ways that they can encourage civic engagement in 2020, and will coordinate those efforts and provide advice/tools where necessary. The Committee will plan a series of campus-wide announcements and flyers alerting students to voter registration deadlines, absentee application deadlines, debates and primary election dates. The committee will also put together a FAQ website about voting, the QR code of which can appear on all our flyers. We will make a large scale wall hanging, copies of which will be hung in several high profile places. We will make available to students, and to all participating organizations on campus, personalized information about their state's rules and deadlines.

We've decided we need to focus on three elements:

1. Helping students overcome logistical barriers to voting
2. Helping students acquire the information to be confident they can cast a meaningful vote
3. Motivating students to participate

While we are in the early stages of planning our efforts, here are some of the plans already in motion:

#### Planning efforts

1. We are sending eight people (including 5 students) to the Student Vote Summit in Philadelphia

2. The Student Engagement Office will reach out to fraternities and sororities to invite them to participate.
3. For primary season, the Voter Engagement Committee will publicize deadlines for registration and absentee ballots for the primaries in the states where we have the most students. NY and CT are both 4/28, and NJ is 6/2. MA, CA, and VA are all on 3/3, which is Super Tuesday.

#### Strategies to work on our three elements

1. Helping students overcome logistical barriers to voting
  - a. Campus Ministry Social Action has already begun tabling to register voters, and will continue to do so at different locations across campus.
  - b. Maeve Adams hosted the League of Women Voters to do two on-campus trainings for volunteers doing voter registration in February.
  - c. We are planning to offer voter registration to incoming students during Freshman Orientation
  - d. We'll make a fall calendar of dates to alert students to deadlines for registering, getting absentee ballots and voting.
2. Helping students acquire the information to be confident they can cast a meaningful vote
  - a. The Lasallian Women and Gender Resource Center will be sponsoring a series during 2020 on Women and the Vote in honor of the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment, and will use those events to register students and encourage voting.
  - b.
3. Motivating students to participate
  - a. The Government and Politics Club will, as it has done in the past, host debate watch parties and do voter registration.
  - b. Zena Kaufman from the League of Women Voters will make a presentation about the history of women's voting rights and where we are with the Equal Rights Amendment, on March 4 from 11AM-12PM.
  - c. Our committee is working on additional ways to inform/excite students about the election.

#### Committee (in formation):

Margaret Groarke, Professor of Political Science, Coordinator of Community Engaged Learning

Michael Steele, Office of Student Engagement

Jacqueline Martin, Campus Ministry Social Action

Kathleen Von Euw, Campus Ministry Social Action

Jonathan Keller, Assistant Professor of Political Science

Richard Gustavson, Department of Mathematics

Marianne Reilly, Director of Athletics

Will Aloia, Assistant Athletic Director for Compliance & Life Skills

Rabea Ali '20, School of Business, Newman Civic Fellow

Kaylyn Atkins '20, School of Liberal Arts, President, Student Government

Representative from the Lasallian Women and Gender Resource Center

Hayden Greene, Multicultural Center

Sydney Collins '22

Carolyn Allen, '23  
Megan LaCreta '23  
Maura Phelan '20  
Ireland Twiggs '21  
Doriz Yari '23  
Erinn Kehoe, Office of Study Abroad  
Pierre Campbell, Office of Residence Life

## 2020 ELECTION CALENDAR

Tuesday, April 28 Primary election in NY and CT  
Tuesday, June 2 Primary in New Jersey  
Tuesday, September 22 Voter Registration Day  
Tuesday, November 3 Election Day