



# **Marietta College Democratic Engagement Action Plan: Spring 2023 - Fall 2023**



**Marietta College**

*Throughout this document, we mention the Strengthening American Democracy Guide as a resource for your review. We encourage you to turn to that resource for guidance and support as you complete your action plan!*

## I. Executive Summary

This action plan was developed by Andrew Novak, Democracy Fellow with the office of community engagement to communicate our strategy for increasing both the registration and turnout rates of voters at Marietta College. The planned activities outlined here will be carried out over Spring 2023 - Fall 2023, on and around our campus in Marietta, Ohio. This action plan encompasses short and long term goals as soon as the next few months and up to three years.

Gabriel Lamb who was just hired as Election engagement coordinator will be taking on future efforts once Novak graduates in December. In the future, election activities will be headed by the election coordinator and democracy fellow hired by CVP as a team. The team strategy is being implemented so both positions can support each other and collaborate to increase engagement on campus. A copy of this action plan will be available on the CVP website and in the community engagement office.

The following groups will be leading this work at Marietta College in order to accomplish our goals and further institutionalize our commitment to civic learning, democratic engagement, and youth participation in elections:

- Undergraduate Students
- Faculty
- Civic/Political/Community Engagement Center
- Executive leadership on campus
- McDonough leadership students

## II. Leadership

Andrew Novak - Democracy Fellow will be overseeing our work to increase civic learning and democratic engagement on campus. They will be supported in this work by: Dr. Amy Elliot Director of Community Engagement leads the charge from the faculty point of view. Additionally, Professor Jason Nulton the Community Engagement Coordinator, joined the McDonough Leadership Center this semester. The Office of Community Engagement (OCE) is adding a new work study position to aid democratic participation on campus called the Democratic Engagement Coordinator. Gabriel Lamb is being onboarded for this position.

The next step that would advance democratic engagement at Marietta is a voting coalition. This coalition ought to be inclusive of:

- Leaders who can help with outreach and power building by bringing more people across campus into our work
- Campus executive leaders to help institutionalize the coalition
- Athletic department representatives
- Student life representatives and office of diversity and inclusion
- Local election office representatives
- Political science department representatives
- Student Groups

Our group should plan to meet once a month at an *accessible* location.

We are also partnering with the following organizations from the Students Learn Students Vote Coalition to support our efforts on campus:

- Campus Vote Project
- ALL-IN Campus Democracy Challenge

### III. Commitment

Our institution and our campus leadership demonstrate commitment to improving civic learning and democratic engagement. We also see this same commitment reflected in our institution's values. They state, "Marietta College provides a strong foundation for a lifetime of leadership, critical thinking, and problem-solving. We achieve this mission by offering undergraduates a contemporary liberal arts education and graduate students an education grounded in advanced knowledge and professional practice. Intellectual and creative excellence defines the Marietta experience."

We also have had a senior leader commit to civic learning and democratic engagement on our campus. Encourage President Ruud to send an email to the student body around key election seasons encouraging people to vote.

On campus, we've seen:

- Political clubs or student organizations
- Voter registration tables
- Signage promoting Election Day

On campus, we've experienced:

- Voting in student body elections
- Political speakers
- Registering to vote
- Civic Holiday events (such as National Voter Registration Day, National Voter Education Week, and Vote Early Day)

The emphasis on civic learning and democratic engagement could be increased. First, the coalition needs to be built up to organize efforts, so they are the most effective and streamlined. Second, organizing the office of community engagement reinforces our capacity to carry out the mission. Lastly, administrators need to be kept up to date on efforts to show our commitment to the cause as well and constantly remind administrators these efforts are ongoing.

## IV. Landscape

The following tables provide a brief overview of the landscape of our campus. This information is based on data collected from 2020 when our total student enrollment was 1265.

### Enrollment Data:

Undergraduate	Graduate	Full Time	Part Time
90.00%	10.00%	6.00%	94.00%

In-State	Out-of-State	International Students	On-Campus Residents	Commuter
55.00%	35.00%	10.00%	-	-

### Gender Demographics:

Men	Women	Non-Binary	Transgender
51.00%	49.00%	-	-

### Racial Demographics:

Asian	American Indian / Alaska Native	Black	Hispanic	Native Hawaiian / Pacific Islander	White	2 or More Races
1.00%	0.00%	4.00%	2.00%	0.00%	82.00%	8.00%

Our institution has also utilized the National Survey of Student Engagement to gather data. They help to inform our institution's civic learning and democratic engagement efforts by empirically showing us who votes the least. By not knowing who votes we can make a conscious effort to reach out to under voting demographics.

## V. Goals

Before setting our civic learning and democratic engagement goals on campus, we took the following information into consideration.

We know our campus faces following challenges internally when it comes to get out the vote efforts and registering voters:

- We don't have institutionally built in a student whose job responsibility is to foster civic learning and democratic engagement on our campus.
- We don't have a coalition of people who are positioned to implement civic learning and democratic engagement on our campus.
- We don't have processes in place for registering large percentages of our students.
- We don't have ways in which we communicate voting information to our students.
- We don't use the resources readily available to develop and implement civic learning and democratic engagement on our campus.
- The voter engagement work on our campus is very siloed within one office.
- We don't have sustainable or consistent funding.
- We have trouble engaging student leaders for the leadership of our initiative.

We also know our campus faces the following challenges externally when it comes to get out the vote efforts and registering voters:

- We don't have a working relationship with our local election office.
- Reaching out to graduate students

With that said, we know our campus has the following strengths when we approach our voter engagement work:

- Our institution's mission statement, values, and strategic plan mention civic learning and democratic engagement.
- We have someone whose job responsibility is to foster civic learning and democratic engagement on our campus.
- Voter engagement efforts on campus are nonpartisan.
- We have working relationships with community partners who are invested in civic learning and democratic engagement.

With this in mind, we have set the three goals that we would like to achieve over the next academic year:

- Create and sustain a non-partisan coalition consisting of various groups on campus to advance voter registration.
- Establish a permanent voter registration table in an accessible location on campus.
- Purchase a voter registration banner for tabling events to increase visibility

We have also set three goals that we would like to achieve over the next five years:

- Reach < 90% voter registration rate on campus
- Have a freshman seminar during orientation dedicated to voting
- Reinstate Marietta Campus as a polling location

## VI. Strategy

Below, we have outlined a strategy describing how we will bring this vision to life in the coming months and years.

These are tactics that we **are already doing** in the **short term** (within the next year):

- Tabling

These are tactics that we **plan to do** in the **short term**:

- Social media campaigns
- Educational events (speakers, kahoot/jeopardy/bingo)
- Tabling cont.

These are tactics that we **hope to do** in the **short term**:

- Establish the voter registration station
- Do a registration event with another club

These are tactics that we **are already doing** for the **long term** (beyond the next year):

- New staff added to the office of community engagement

These are tactics that we **want to do** in the **long term**:

- Freshman voting seminar

These are tactics that we **hope to do** in the **long term**:

- Reinstate Marietta's campus as a polling location
- Have a candidate visit Marietta or even hold a debate (which happened once before in the past I believe)



## **VII. National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE)**

Our campus has access to our National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) data for 2020. In 2020 our registration rate was 82.9. In comparison to the data from four years prior in our NSLVE report, this rate increased. In 2020, our voting rate was 60.6 and our voting rate among registered students was 73.1. During this year, our voting rate was lower than the national average.

A copy of the 2020 report circulated faculty at Marietta recently, putting democratic engagement on their radar. Otherwise, the campus NSLVE report does not get the attention it deserves. An effort to post the NSLVE report on the college voting website will be made this fall.

## VIII. Reporting & Evaluation

We plan to share this Action Plan internally when it is complete by taking the following actions:

- Hard copy in office of community engagement
- Office of community engagement coordinator and director
- Voter engagement coordinator

We plan to share this Action Plan externally when it is complete by taking the following actions:

- Share with executive leadership and the board of trustees meeting
- Email to campus administration
- Email to the President
- Student life

We plan to evaluate our success by:

- Reviewing our NSLVE data and looking for improvements in voter rates
- Breakdown by demographic to identify any groups that are voting at significantly lower rates