

Marist VOTES

Civic Action Plan

2024

Marist College's submission to the
ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge



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Executive Summary

- This ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge Action Plan was developed by the leadership team of MaristVOTES.
 - The student-lead, non-partisan campus organization is overseen by Dr. Melissa Gaeke, the Director of the Center for Civic Engagement and Leadership (CCEL) at Marist College.
 - This plan was written by Sylvia Wysor, the Director of MaristVOTES, with input from the MaristVOTES team and Dr. Gaeke.
- This action plan outlines the coordination efforts that MaristVOTES will take during the 2024-2025 academic year.
- This plan will establish a clear line of focus and work for the fall 2024 semester, which will support new student leaders while members from the previous board study abroad.

The goals for the upcoming fall semester include:

- Increasing student voter turnout in 2024 presidential elections.
- Increasing overall campus civic participation through on-campus events in partnership with the other branches of the CCEL including (Campus Garden and Semester Sweepout).
- Integrating aspects of civic education into Marist College curriculum, possibly through Community-Based Learning (CBL) classes.



Executive Summary

- The plan is intended to be implemented over the remaining course of the spring 2024 semester, and into the fall 2024 semester.
- During the final weeks of the spring semester, current student leaders will work with the new student leaders to explain their role in the organization, and will help to prepare them for the fall semester.
- As a part of this preparation, current student leaders will develop “toolkits.”
 - These will include social media calendars, event calendars, contact information for individuals on campus, as well as logistical information that might be useful when planning or hosting events.
- The new student leaders will start the fall semester and will use the toolkits developed in the spring to help carry out events and meetings.



Mission

The mission of Marist VOTES is to promote access to the electoral and democratic processes and increase student voter turnout through voter education and engagement.

Leadership

Current Leadership

MaristVOTES is the lead campus entity for participation in the ALL IN Democracy Challenge.

Faculty Leadership

- Dr. Melissa A. Gaekes, Ph.D., Senior Professional Lecturer in Political Science
- MaristVOTES is a branch of the Marist College Center for Civic Engagement and Leadership (CCEL), directed by Dr. Gaeke

Student Leadership

- Sylvia Wysor '26, serves as the Director of MaristVOTES
- The MaristVOTES organization is made up of around 12 other students who, at times, will take the lead on particular projects (i.e. presenting to First Year Seminar classes regarding voter registration)

Outside Student Organizations

- Student leaders from the boards of other on-campus clubs and organizations will be involved with the implementation of the MaristVOTES action plan.
- These clubs include, but are not limited to: Marist Democrats, Marist Republicans, Marist Moderates, Marist SEED (Students Encouraging Environmental Dedication), Marist Circle, Marist Model UN, the Student Government Association, affinity groups, STEM societies, and Greek life organizations.

Leadership

Current Leadership

Campus Offices

- MaristVOTES will work closely with the office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) to ensure that all voices can be heard and represented.
- MaristVOTES will also continue to work with the First Year Program office, including the First Year Seminar Program Director, Patricia Tarantello, and other faculty.
- MaristVOTES will also work with the athletics department to implement the action plan.

Campus Administration

- MaristVOTES will form a stronger relationship with campus administration over the course of implementing the action plan.
- This includes the organization's relationship with the college president, Kevin C. Weinman. MaristVOTES will ask him to sign the ALL IN Campus Democracy President's Commitment.

Off-Campus Partnerships

- In addition to coalition building on the Marist campus, MaristVOTES looks forward to continuing their partnerships with other campuses in the Hudson Valley.
- MaristVOTES will continue to work with the Hudson Valley Student Voting Coalition (HVSVC).
 - This coalition is made up of Elections at Bard and the Bard Center for Civic Engagement, which have been a supplement to the success of MaristVOTES.
 - The HVSVC looks forward to involving Vassar College once again, and expanding to other colleges in the region.

Leadership

Current Leadership

Off-Campus Partnerships

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- MaristVOTES will continue to work with the Hudson Valley Student Voting Coalition (HVSVC).
 - This coalition is made up of Elections at Bard and the Bard Center for Civic Engagement, which have been a supplement to the success of MaristVOTES.
 - The HVSVC looks forward to involving Vassar College once again, and expanding to other colleges in the region.
- MaristVOTES will also reach out to the Dutchess County Board of Elections to see if they would like to participate in any of the organization's meetings or planning.
 - MaristVOTES also will determine how students from Marist can best support the Board of Elections.
 - The goal is to form a mutually beneficial relationship in order to bring an element of joy back into the voting process.

Leadership

Leadership Succession Plan

Faculty Leadership

- Faculty leadership will continue within the Center for Civic Engagement and Leadership

Student Leadership

- Student organizers will continue to work on recruiting students to the MaristVOTES team.
- If a Director chooses to step down, they will inform the MaristVOTES team a semester prior to their resignation, so that an Assistant Director can be selected and use the semester to become oriented, before stepping into the role of Director.
- For the first semester that a student serves as Director, unless circumstances do not allow for it, the previous Director will act as a mentor and remain available for guidance.
- In the case that a student leader must take a leave of absence due to a study-abroad commitment, they will prepare a delegate to act in their stead before returning the semester afterwards.
- The student going abroad will spend time the semester before their travels preparing the delegate with all materials and information they may need. In some instances, this might look like one of the aforementioned “tool kits.”
- All functioning of MaristVOTES should continue smoothly, regardless of whether student leaders are located at Marist College, or spending a semester at another institution.

Commitment

Marist College Center for Civic Engagement and Leadership (CCEL)

- Marist College is dedicated to helping students develop the intellect, character, and skills required for enlightened, ethical and productive lives in the global community of the 21st century.
- The college executes this work in part through the Center for Civic Engagement and Leadership (CCEL).
- The mission of the CCEL is to promote the principle that civic engagement and Community Based Learning (CBL) empower students to connect their academic work to their wider interests.
- Ultimately, the work of the CCEL is to strengthen civil society at Marist College, and beyond, by forming civically educated citizens.
- MaristVOTES plans on further integrating civic involvement through developing a curriculum that can be adopted by First Year Seminar Programs, and taught to first year students during their first semester at Marist.

CCEL and the Poughkeepsie Community

- The Center for Civic Engagement and Leadership at Marist College is committed to connecting students with their community.
- Marist students are encouraged through the CCEL to create an impact on their local community and beyond.
- MaristVOTES will remain committed to setting the framework for student voter programming and engagement at Marist College and in the surrounding community.
- MaristVOTES is committed to the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge.

Commitment

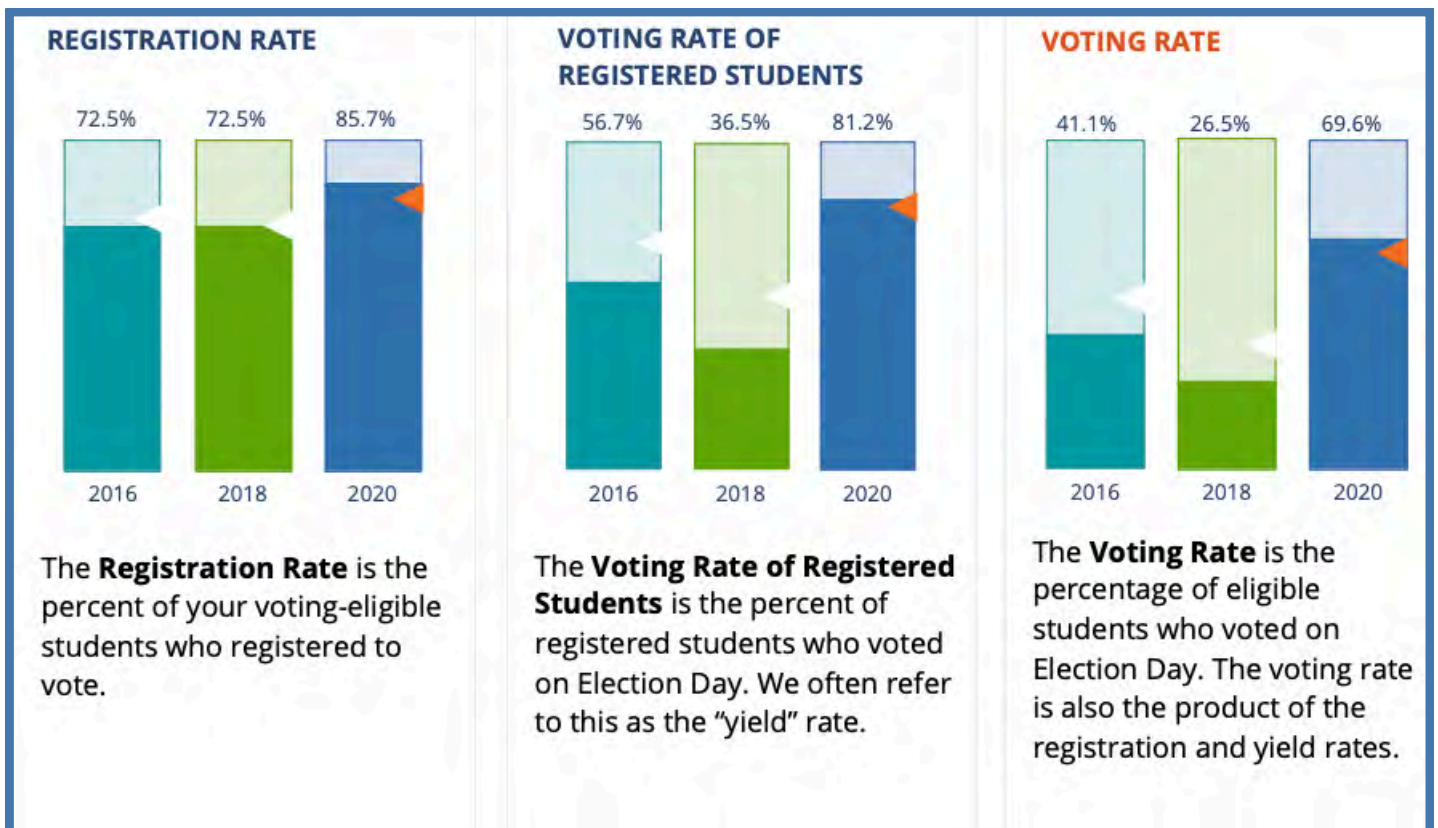
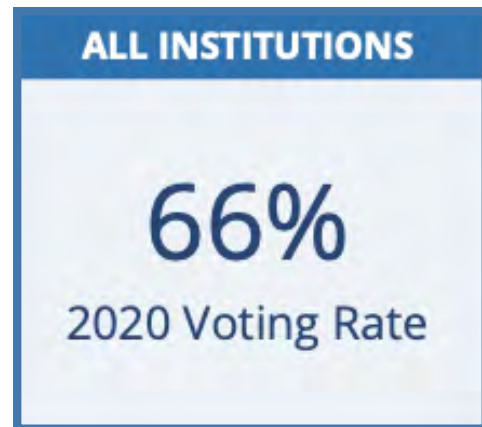
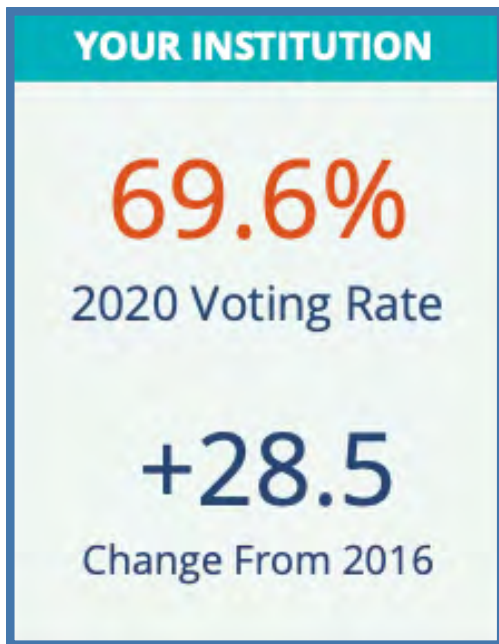
Outside Organizations

- MaristVOTES is also committed to increasing engagement with student groups at Marist College in addition to partnerships with non-profits.
- MaristVOTES looks forward to strengthening connections with election officials, members of the League of Women Voters, National Student Vote Coalition, campus partners across the nation, and others.
- Furthermore, MaristVOTES would like to establish relations with the Marist Abroad office to ensure that students studying abroad have the resources they need made available to them so that they are not excluded from the voting process.

Landscape

Marist College

NSLVE Data from Marist College



Landscape

Marist College

NSLVE Data from Marist College

- Thanks to the work of Julia McCarthy, who started MaristVOTES as her Honors Thesis in 2018, MaristVOTES has seen significant increase in Marist's voting rates.

By Fields of Study

Fields	2016			2018			2020			2016-2020 Change
	Enrolled	Voted	Rate	Enrolled	Voted	Rate	Enrolled	Voted	Rate	
Area, Ethnic, Cultural, and Gender Studies	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Biological and Biomedical Sciences	305	119	39	309	70	23	371	257	69	↑ 30
Business, Management, and Marketing	1,807	664	37	1,806	365	20	1,700	1,105	65	↑ 28
Communications and Journalism	932	393	42	819	202	25	799	581	73	↑ 31
Computer and Information Sciences	639	228	36	652	170	26	528	316	60	↑ 24
Education	100	45	45	82	19	23	266	203	76	↑ 31
English Language and Literature	76	36	47	77	31	40	67	54	81	↑ 33

Fields	2016			2018			2020			2016-2020 Change
	Enrolled	Voted	Rate	Enrolled	Voted	Rate	Enrolled	Voted	Rate	
Health Professions	170	64	38	234	59	25	291	188	65	↑ 27
History	33	14	42	40	17	43	41	33	80	↑ 38
Law Enforcement, Firefighting, and Protection	160	58	36	204	48	24	182	123	68	↑ 31
Legal Professions and Studies	83	47	57	102	32	31	86	69	80	↑ 24
Liberal Arts and Sciences, and Humanities	240	81	34	232	45	19	191	126	66	↑ 32
Mathematics and Statistics	91	37	41	91	23	25	52	40	77	↑ 36
Multi/Interdisciplinary Studies	150	87	58	124	64	52	64	40	63	↑ 5
Natural Resources and Conservation	48	17	35	48	18	38	48	36	75	↑ 40
Philosophy and Religious Studies	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Physical Sciences	17	-	-	28	12	43	24	17	71	-
Psychology	564	230	41	602	171	28	490	347	71	↑ 30
Public Administration and Social Service Program	317	213	67	304	173	57	276	214	78	↑ 10
Social Sciences	124	62	50	175	63	36	183	126	69	↑ 19
Visual and Performing Arts	253	90	36	302	70	23	348	236	68	↑ 32
Unknown	358	59	16	250	18	7	35	17	49	↑ 32

- The 2020 NSLVE data demonstrates that MaristVOTES has work to do to increase the population of student voters in Computer and Information Sciences majors.
- To accomplish this, MaristVOTES will explore specific messaging to engage with this group of students specifically, in order to increase the voting rate in upcoming election cycles.

Landscape

New York State

NSLVE Data from ALL-IN's New York State Summary

7.2%

Average 2020 campus voter registration change at New York campuses compared to 2016*

Compared to 7 point increase for national student voting*

81.1%

Average 2020 voter registration rate at ALL IN New York campuses*

Compared to the national student registration rate of 83%*

17.9%

Average 2020 campus voter turnout change at New York campuses compared to 2016*

Compared to the 14 point increase for national student voting*

62.5%

Average voting rate among ALL IN New York campuses in 2020*

Compared to the national student voting rate of 66%*

- While Marist College has remained open to participation in local, state, and national elections, MaristVOTES believes that there is more that can be done.
- In the past, Marist College has hosted congressional and local debates that have been open to students.
- MaristVOTES hopes to work to facilitate more of this type of involvement in the upcoming semesters.
- Furthermore, MaristVOTES remains open to hosting election officials, office holders, and non-profits from the Poughkeepsie and New York area.

Goals and Strategy

General Goals

- Promote civic engagement through implementing campus-wide voter education.
- Increase student voter registration.
- Increase student voter turnout in the 2024 election.

Goals and Strategy

Short Term Goals

- Participate in campus wide activities fair to increase student engagement
 - Recruit at least ten students on an interest form to involve with upcoming MaristVOTES meetings
- Work with campus security to create a Marist College Student ID that would serve as both a valid voter identification, and campus ID card
- Create voter education presentations that will be presented in First Year Seminar Classes
 - Create voter education toolkits that MaristVOTES representatives can use to ensure all presentations are presented in the same way, using the same language
- Work with the center for social media to create a social media campaign to encourage voter registration
 - Create messaging for specific groups (ex: STEM students and computer science students)
- Create social media toolkit with messaging and specific dates that will be used during the Fall 2024 semester
- Increase campus and community partnerships to increase civic engagement work (Dutchess County Board of Elections, Marist Athletics, Marist College Greek Life)
- Work in partnership with the Marist Abroad Office to ensure that students have access to absentee ballots while they are abroad during fall semester
- Establish student leaders for the fall 2024 semester

Goals and Strategy

Long Term Goals

- Using empathy and coalition, foster a sense of joy in the electoral and democratic processes to create a more civically engaged campus environment.
- Continue to develop lasting relationships with campus administration, campus groups, non-profits, and coalition members.
- Establish a succession plan that encourages new students to join MaristVOTES and step into leadership roles within the organization that allows the organization to continue to operate even after its current student leaders graduate.

Goals and Strategy

Strategy

In order to accomplish the above goals, MaristVOTES will continue to push for more student engagement on campus. This will be facilitated in the following methods.

- Participation with other campus clubs, teams, and groups
- Hosting joint events with other campus groups
- Reaching out to faculty members and staff who might have an interest in supporting the work of MaristVOTES

Furthermore, once these relationships are established, MaristVOTES will remain committed to hosting recurring team meetings and campus-wide events.

- The MaristVOTES board will meet once a week and participate in an open “office hours” sort of arrangement where students will be encouraged to “drop by” during the designated times to have their voices heard and questions answered
- In addition, MaristVOTES will continue to invite students across campus to participate in MaristVOTES events and events co-hosted with MaristVOTES

MaristVOTES will establish itself as the accepted student voter organization at Marist College that encourages student participation in a way similar to how an organization like Student Government Association might function.

Self Assessment and Evaluation

Once the plan is finalized and approved by internal (Dr. Gaeke) and external (ALL IN, NSLVE), the plan will be shared publicly with Marist College students.

The plan will be digitally accessible on the MaristVOTES LinkTree and Instagram. To reach the broader Marist community, we aim to have the plan posted by the official Marist College social media channels and on the Marist College Website.

Additional distribution opportunities to explore include a placement in the campus newspaper, the Marist Circle (published digitally and in print) and faculty newsletters available on campus.

Evaluating the success of this plan will be an ongoing process. MaristVOTES looks forward to getting feedback from campus administration, faculty, and students.

In addition, MaristVOTES looks forward to sharing the NSLVE reports with these groups to encourage further participation and involvement in the implementation of this plan across campus.

The NSLVE 2024 Data is anticipated to be useful in evaluating the success of this plan. This data will be shared with the Marist community as a part of the messaging strategy.

Timeline

January 2024

- Host brainstorming meetings with all members of the MaristVOTES in order to establish clear goals of voter education curriculum and social media campaigns
- Participate in campus-wide activities fair to generate interest in MaristVOTES

February 2024

- Host meeting of the Hudson Valley Student Voter Coalition with Bard College to discuss election day celebrations
- Communicate with necessary staff to create a campus ID that would serve as valid voter identification (That can be given to students beginning with the class of 2028)
- Work with center for social media to create social media campaign to encourage voter registration, with messaging at specific groups

March 2024

- Have clearly established voter education and social media toolkits that will set up MaristVOTES for Fall 2024, when current student leaders will be abroad
- Start to consider future student leaders/possible delegates for the Fall 2024 semester
- Work in partnership with the Marist Abroad office to ensure that students have access to absentee ballots while they are abroad

Timeline

April 2024

- Establish future student leaders/delegates for the Fall 2024 semester, and have them “shadow” their respective board position
- Train student presenters in presenting to First Year Seminar Classes using the voter education toolkit
- CCEL Friendship Bracelet event (April 24, 2024)

May 2024

- Work with new student leaders to help prepare them for Fall 2024
 - Share contact information, Website/Social Media information
- Print graphics/signs for Fall 2024
- Finalize Tool Kits
- Finalize calendars for Fall 2024
- Submit revised action plan (May 31)

June 2024

- Prepare social media graphics to be posted throughout the Fall 2024 semester
- Continue to post on social medias to remain “active” and work with social media platforms’ algorithms

Timeline

July 2024

- Continue to work on social media messaging campaigns

August 2024

- Students arrive back on campus around August 26
- MaristVOTES' representatives will be at tables for the Activity Fair and any Orientation Week activities

September 2024

- MaristVOTES will reach out to faculty from the First Year Seminar Program to determine student voter presentation schedules.
 - This opportunity will also be shared with other faculty at Marist, however, the initial focus will be on first-year classes.
 - MaristVOTES representatives will work to establish a presentation schedule.
- Establish an “office hours” system which can also serve as weekly meetings for the MaristVOTES team.
- Begin brainstorming for possible tabling and events that MaristVOTES can host.
 - Share election information
 - Voter registration
 - Absentee ballot

Timeline

October 2024

- Continue to hold office hours, tabling, and hosting events.
 - These events can be held with other clubs/groups on campus
 - Goal of these events should be for students to register to vote and to apply for absentee ballots

November 2024

- Tabling to help students return their absentee ballot
 - Stamping and mailing them out
- Election Day Celebration
 - Working with the office of DEI to establish a way to celebrate that includes all, and is sensitive to everyone's concerns and joys
- Begin drafting ALL-IN Action Plan for the 2024-2025 academic year

December 2024

- Submit action plan to ALL IN

Timeline

MaristVOTES anticipates changes and further explanation of this timeline once a clear group of students has been identified to lead MaristVOTES during the 2024 Fall semester. We expect this to occur sometime during the Spring 2024 semester, hopefully towards the beginning of February after the campus-wide activities fair has taken place and student interest has been gauged.

Throughout this time period, MaristVOTES will remain committed to forming relationships with groups across campus, and will foster these relationships through attending and promoting events, speakers, and other activities.