

# MARSHALL UNIVERSITY

VOTER FRIENDLY CAMPUS PLAN  
2024-2025



## Voter Friendly Campus Planning Team

**Montserrat Miller**, Executive Director, John Deaver Drinko Academy, Co-Chair

**Kacy Lovelace**, Research and Student Success Librarian, Co-Chair

**Cara Bailey**, Assistant Dean, Honors College

**Jaylene Berrien**, Director of Student-Athlete Holistic Programming

**Michelle Biggs**, Director, HERD Start Early Academy

**Michael Borsuk**, Student Representative, Immediate Past-President, College Republicans

**Reagan Clagg**, Student Representative, President, College Democrats

**Corey Cunningham**, Coordinator of Fraternities and Sororities

**Matt James**, Executive Director of Alumni Relations, Marshall University Foundation

**Kelli Johnson**, Associate Dean, University Libraries

**Laura Hundley**, Graduate Student Representative, Lewis College of Business

**Jamie Mathis**, Staff Librarian, University Libraries

**Diane Palmieri**, Staff Librarian, University Libraries

**Leah Payne**, Director of University Communications

**Eiryn Poindexter**, Extra Help, University Libraries

**Patricia Proctor**, Esq., Director, Simon Perry Center for Constitutional Democracy

**Sydnor Roy**, Assistant Professor of Classics

**Patsy Stephenson**, Staff Librarian, University Libraries

**Walker Tatum**, Director of Alumni Engagement, Marshall University Foundation

**Stephen Tipler**, Web and Digital Services Librarian, University Libraries

**Leah Tolliver**, Assistant Dean, Intercultural and Student Affairs





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# Marshall University Quick Facts

- **A student-centered research university** located in downtown Huntington, West Virginia, with additional locations in South Charleston, Point Pleasant, and Beckley
- **Founded 1837** as Marshall Academy
- **Named For John Marshall**, 4th Chief Justice of the United States
- **Accreditation:** Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association
- **Research Funding:** \$65+ million annually
- **Alumni:** 107,000+

## PROGRAMS OFFERED

- 3 Associate Degree Programs
- 80 Baccalaureate Majors and Areas of Emphasis
- 52 Master's Degree Programs
- 2 Education Specialist Degree Programs
- 32 Graduate Certificate Programs
- 4 Research Doctoral Degree Programs
- 6 Professional Doctoral Degree Programs

## ATHLETICS

- NCAA Division I, Sun Belt Conference
- NCAA Men's Sports: Baseball, Basketball, Cross Country, Football, Golf, Soccer, Track/Field
- NCAA Women's Sports: Basketball, Cheerleading, Golf, Soccer, Softball, Swimming and Diving, Tennis, Track/Field, Cross Country, Volleyball
- Spirit Groups: Cheerleading, Dance Team, Marching Thunder, Pep Band
- Student-Athletes: 467
- 32 Intramural Sports offered through The Rec including: Soccer, Basketball, Flag Football, Dodgeball and Wiffleball
- 10 Club Sports: Hockey, Men's and Women's Rugby, Tennis, Sports Fencing Club, Men's and Women's Lacrosse, Cycling, Wrestling, and Equestrian





## Campus Life

- **230** recognized student organizations
- **Student Services:** Center for African American Students, College Program for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder, Career Services, Counseling Center, Health Services, H.E.L.P. Program, Security/Escort Service, Tutoring, Women's Center, Student Resource Center, Writing Center • Study Abroad Programs: 250 sites in 50 countries
- **Housing and Residence Life:** 3 freshman halls, 7 upper class halls, 2,560 total capacity
- **Cars:** All students are permitted to have cars and may purchase a university parking permit.
- **National Student Exchange Program:** 200 colleges within the U.S. and Canada
- **Fraternities:** 11; **Sororities:** 7
- **Services:** Student Legal Assistance, Student Engagement and Community, Veteran and Military Support
- **Career Education:** Helping students, faculty and employers connect and engage.

## Student Body (Fall 2023 Data)

- **Total:** 11,269
- **60% Female; 40% Male**
- **Undergraduate:** 8,252 (73.2%)
- **Graduate:** 3,017 (26.8%)
- **Minority Students:** 1,547 (14.7%) (excludes unreported)
- **International Students:** 155 (1.4%)
- **Out-of-State:** 2,447 (21.7%)
- **Students from:** 48 states and 49 countries
- **Average Incoming Freshman ACT:** 22
- **Average Incoming Freshman GPA:** 3.57
- **First to Second Year retention rate of first-time freshmen 2022-23:** 78.7%
- **Degrees Granted 2022-23:** 2,616

## Faculty/Class Size

- **Faculty with Ph.D. or terminal degree in their fields:** 86% with school of medicine
- **Minority Faculty:** 21% of full-time instructional faculty
- **Average Class Size:** 19

State	County	Headcount	State	County	Headcount	State	County	Headcount	State	County	Headcount
<b>Alabama</b>			<b>Mississippi</b>			<b>Pennsylvania</b>				Calhoun	8
	Etowah	3		Lee	1		Allegheny	14		Clay	22
	Jefferson	2	<b>New York</b>				Beaver	1		Doddridge	2
	Lauderdale	1		Broome	1		Butler	1		Fayette	120
	Madison	1		Cattaraugus	1		Cambria	2		Gilmer	12
<b>Georgia</b>				Cortland	1		Centre	2		Grant	9
	Bartow	1	<b>North Carolina</b>				Clinton	1		Greenbrier	67
	Cherokee	1		Avery	2		Erie	1		Hampshire	10
	Floyd	2		Buncombe	7		Fayette	6		Hancock	23
	Forsyth	2		Catawba	2		Greene	3		Hardy	5
	Gwinnett	7		Cleveland	1		Mercer	1		Harrison	51
	Hall	1		Davie	1		Monroe	2		Jackson	105
	Jackson	2		Forsyth	4		Northumberland	1		Jefferson	48
	White	1		Surry	1		Tioga	1		Kanawha	1353
<b>Kentucky</b>				Transylvania	1		Washington	6		Lewis	13
	Adair	1	<b>Ohio</b>				Westmoreland	6		Lincoln	231
	Boyd	147		Adams	2	<b>South Carolina</b>				Logan	197
	Breathitt	1		Ashtabula	1		Greenville	5		Marion	47
	Carter	24		Athens	3		Oconee	2		Marshall	38
	Clark	2		Belmont	7		Spartanburg	4		Mason	363
	Elliott	1		Brown	6	<b>Tennessee</b>				McDowell	41
	Estill	1		Clermont	17		Anderson	1		Mercer	146
	Floyd	12		Columbiana	2		Coffee	1		Mineral	13
	Greenup	64		Gallia	74		Hamilton	1		Mingo	131
	Johnson	12		Guernsey	2		Knox	4		Monongalia	88
	Lawrence	25		Highland	4		Sevier	1		Monroe	22
	Lewis	6		Jackson	12		Sullivan	2		Morgan	6
	Madison	5		Jefferson	5		Washington	3		Nicholas	63
	Martin	8		Lawrence	445	<b>Virginia</b>				Ohio	55
	Morgan	2		Mahoning	6		Botetourt	1		Pendleton	7
	Nicholas	1		Meigs	7		Buchanan	3		Pleasants	14
	Perry	3		Monroe	3		Giles	1		Pocahontas	9
	Pike	16		Morgan	1		Lee	1		Preston	28
	Pulaski	1		Muskingum	3		Montgomery	1		utnam	1198
	Rockcastle	1		Noble	1		Russell	2		Raleigh	241
	Rowan	3		Perry	1		Tazewell	2		Randolph	49
	Russell	1		Pike	19		Washington	3		Ritchie	22
	Whitley	2		Ross	15		Wise	1		Roane	34
<b>Maryland</b>				Scioto	108		Wythe	1		Summers	26
	Allegany	5		Trumbull	1	<b>West Virginia</b>				Taylor	4
	Garrett	2		Tuscarawas	4		Barbour	12		Tucker	3
	Washington	6		Vinton	1		Berkeley	70		Tyler	10
				Washington	10		Boone	127		Upshur	26
							Braxton	20		Wayne	471
							Brooke	13		Webster	23
							Cabell	2945		Wetzel	29
										Wirt	11
										Wood	151
										Wyoming	77

**Grand Total 10,157**

March 1, 2024

MARSHALL UNIVERSITY  
OFFICE OF INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH AND PLANNING  
**Voter Friendly Campus Data Request**

**Fall 2023 Enrolled Students with Permanent Address in Appalachian Region**

\*Appalachian Region determined using ARC definition available at [www.arc.gov/appalachian\\_region/CountiesinAppalachia.asp](http://www.arc.gov/appalachian_region/CountiesinAppalachia.asp)

# 05.01.2024

DATE OF DATA  
REPORT FROM  
OFFICE OF  
INSTITUTIONAL  
RESEARCH AND  
PLANNING



**FALL 2023 TOTAL ENROLLMENT: 11,269**

Count of Students from Appalachia: 10,157  
Percentage of Fall 2023 Students from Appalachia: 90.1%

Count of Students from West Virginia: 8,909  
Percentage of Fall 2023 Students from West Virginia: 79%





## Voting Data

- In the 2016 WV general election, the student voting rate at Marshall was 51% (the national student voting rate was 53%)
- In the 2020 WV general election, the student voting rate at Marshall was 63.9% (the national student voting rate was 66%)

*(Data from October 2021, NSLVE Campus Report, Institute for Democracy & Higher Education, Jonathan M. Tisch College of Civic Life)*



63.9%

MU STUDENTS ARE FROM WEST VIRGINIA

MARSHALL UNIVERSITY PRIMARILY SERVES THE SOUTHERN WEST VIRGINIA REGION AS WELL AS SURROUNDING COUNTIES, MANY OF WHICH ARE WITHIN APPALACHIA. MANY MU STUDENTS ARE ALSO FIRST GENERATION.

90.1%

MU STUDENTS ARE FROM AN APPALACHIAN COUNTY





# VOTERS, IT'S Primary Season!

The election cycle doesn't start in November.  
Vote in your state's primary election this spring  
by absentee ballot, early voting or in-person.

### Primary Election Dates

Ohio-March 19 | West Virginia- May 14 | Kentucky - May 21



For voting information for all states, visit: [www.vote.org](http://www.vote.org)  
Visit [www.marshall.edu/herdvotes](http://www.marshall.edu/herdvotes) for more updates and more information.



## General Information

- Marshall University is the first on-campus early voting precinct in the state of West Virginia (West Virginia Secretary of State's office, 2018).
- Any registered voter in Cabell County can utilize the early voting precinct. Students who registered in another West Virginia county can cast a provisional ballot, which is counted during the canvassing period of the election, once it has been verified that the student did not cast a ballot in any additional county other than Cabell (West Virginia Secretary of State's office, 2018).
- Since opening in 2018, voter turnout among voters ages 18-24 has more than doubled (Cabell County Clerk's office, 2018).
- Approximately 1,500 voters utilized the facility in 2018 (Cabell County Clerk's office, 2018).
- Marshall University's early voting precinct employs five full-time staff members for four weeks each election year (Cabell County Clerk's office, 2018).
- Marshall University's early voting precinct is the most ADA compliant early voting precinct in Cabell County (Cabell County Clerk's office, 2018).

# Get your Vote on!

The Cabell County Clerk's Office has placed an  
Early Voting Precinct on Marshall's campus.

## Vote for your representatives

Must be a registered voter in the Cabell County.

**Weekdays: MAY 1-3 AND MAY 6-10 • 8:30 A.M.-4:30 P.M.**

**Saturdays: MAY 4 AND MAY 11 • 9 A.M. - 5 P.M.**

**Drinko Library, Room 138**

(Early voting to be offered in the fall as well, Oct. 22 - Nov. 2)



Contact Kelli Jarrell at the Cabell County Clerk's Office,  
304-526-8633 or Student Affairs at [studentaffairs@marshall.edu](mailto:studentaffairs@marshall.edu)





## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This action plan was developed by Marshall University's Voter Friendly Campus Planning Team, which includes faculty, staff, students, and administrators. The goals of the plan are:

- to increase overall student voting rates;
- to elevate the voting rates of students of color to the same rate as white students;
- to increase voting rates in fields where voting rates do not match the campus-wide voting rate;
- to strengthen the sense of civic responsibility on Marshall's campuses;
- to strengthen voter registration integration into student life by meeting students where they are and making voter registration information available in numerous places on campus;
- to strengthen the integration of Marshall University's "ethical and civic thinking" learning outcome into the general education curriculum;
- and, to improve our capacity to foster democratic engagement.

The plan is being implemented on Marshall's main campus, located in Huntington, West Virginia, at sites beyond the main campus, such as the Joan C. Edwards School of Medicine, the School of Pharmacy, the Brad D. Smith Center for Business and Innovation, and the Visual Arts center, and through digital outreach to all students on all campuses and to those who are full-time online learners.

This action plan was developed out of a shared concern for democracy and a sincere commitment to the responsibility that Marshall University bears in developing the civic consciousness of its students. The plan is directly linked to the institution's commitment to civic learning and democratic engagement, as reflected in its Mission, Vision, and Creed statements, to its Core Curriculum, its programming priorities, and in administrative, faculty, staff, and student culture.

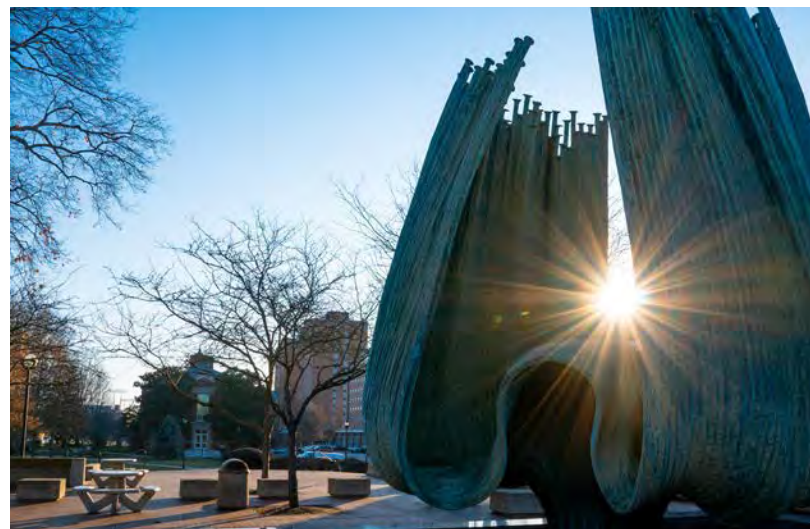
This action plan, focused on both short-term and long-term goals, began to be implemented during Marshall's 2020 Week of Welcome, which preceded the start of the Fall semester. The plan runs through 2030. It is being implemented through the collaborative efforts of the Voter Friendly Campus Planning Team,

with the incorporation of additional individuals and units who express an interest in participating in the effort to achieve the goals. Dr. Montserrat Miller and Kacy Lovelace serve as Co-Chairs of the Voter Friendly Campus Planning Team. Virtual components are coordinated by Stephen Tipler. Marshall University Libraries, The John Deaver Drinko Academy for American Political Institutions and Civic Culture, the Simon Perry Center for Constitutional Democracy, the Division of Intercultural and Student Affairs, the Women's and Gender Center, and the Honors College are among the units that work to facilitate the face-to-face dimensions of the initiative and provide voter education, civic literacy, and civil discourse programming for the campus and the community.

The Voter Friendly Campus Planning Team embraces diverse campus and community stakeholders, remaining strictly non-partisan and open in terms of ideology, gender, class, age, ability, race, religion, background, and other forms of identity. Students from a range of academic majors, sociocultural backgrounds, ages, and ideological perspectives have been incorporated into the planning and programmatic execution of our voter registration, voter education, and voter turnout efforts. Faculty and staff participation also reflect multiple forms of diversity.

## LEADERSHIP

There are several senior administrators involved in the Voter Friendly Campus initiative at Marshall. Montserrat Miller, who is Co-Chair of the Planning Team, serves as Executive Director of the John Deaver Drinko Academy for American Political Institutions and Civic Culture. Miller reports directly to the President, updating him regularly on progress toward the realization of the Planning Team's goals and objectives. Cara Bailey, Assistant Dean of the Honors College, Leah Tolliver, Assistant Dean of Intercultural and Student Affairs, Patricia Proctor, Director of the Simon Perry Center for Constitutional Democracy, and Michelle Biggs, Director of the HERD Early Start Academy, also serve on the team and are deeply involved in the process of planning and delivering programming. The role of these campus leaders is to find resolutions to impediments and to mobilize support for the effort from different sectors of the institution.



The Marshall Voter Friendly Campus Planning Team has the support of the Office of the President and upper administration, which stepped in to provide additional funding for the intensification of face-to-face voter registration/voter information efforts in the final six weeks leading up to the last day for voter registration in West Virginia in Fall of 2020. The Office of the President, along with the Office of Legal and External Affairs, supported voter education efforts in the Fall of 2022, and have voiced strong support for the efforts related to the 2024 election cycle.

Faculty members from Marshall University Libraries (Kacy Lovelace and Stephen Tipler) and the Departments of Political Science (Patricia Proctor), History (Montserrat Miller), Humanities (Sydnor Roy) and Leadership Studies (Tim Melvin) are directly involved as members of the Voter Friendly Campus Planning Team.

The Division of Intercultural and Student Affairs is represented through the participation of Assistant Dean Leah Tolliver, and University College is represented through Michelle Biggs.

Numerous students have been involved, joining the effort through their connection to the Pre-Law Club, the National Society of ACTA Scholars, the Honors College, Student Government, the Women's and Gender Center, and a wide range of organizations, including, the Society of Black Scholars, College Republicans, College Democrats, HERD Against Misogyny, the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee, and Pi Sigma Alpha, the Political Science Honorary. Students have also joined in on voter registration and voter information drives through the LEAD Center (Leadership, Engagement, Activities and Development), the Ambassadors for Social Change program, and the Center for African American Students.

In the leadup to the general election, the Fall 2024 semester's efforts will involve hiring a team of eight part-time student assistants to work from move in day on August 13th to the election day on November 5th. Their job will be to encourage voter registration, voter education, and voter turnout through tabling efforts on campus and at satellite locations. They will be compensated on an hourly basis, using funding from the Drinko Academy's budget. Student recruitment for these positions began in the Spring 2024 semester and will continue through June.

The Voter Friendly Campus Planning Team has consulted with, and received advice from, the League of Women Voters of the Huntington Area, the Office of the Governor of West Virginia, from Young West Virginia, and from West Virginia Free. The Team has also worked directly with Lee Dean, Senior Field Representative for the Office of the Secretary of State of West Virginia, and with Grace Taylor, Chief Deputy Clerk for the Cabell County Clerk's Voter Registration Office in providing an early voting precinct in the Marshall University Memorial Student Center, or in its John Deaver Drinko Library. The Voter Friendly Campus Planning Team also works with ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge and the NSLVE to access resources and data about best practices and voter registration efforts taking place across the country.



The Voter Friendly Campus Planning Team members have various unique strengths. Michele Biggs brings experience in organizing the Student Government Association to help mobilize that sector to become involved in the initiative. Kelli Johnson, who has extensive experience as a community and a campus organizer, has acted to convene and lead the group toward action. Dr. Tim Melvin's unique strength is in assessment. Montserrat Miller heads the John Deaver Drinko Academy for American Political Institutions and Civic Culture, a unit which partners naturally with any and all voter registration and voter information initiatives. Patricia Proctor, Esq., as Founding Director of the Simon Perry Center for Constitutional Democracy, is the Pre-Law Club faculty advisor and organizer of the institution's premier lecture series, bringing in top scholars from across the United States to discuss contemporary challenges to our democratic system of governance. Other members of the team bring skills in the area of communications, marketing, and digital media. All members deliberate in planning. Montserrat Miller coordinates the face-to-face component of Marshall's voter registration/voter information events. Kacy Lovelace coordinates the virtual components, along with the work of the Voter Friendly Campus Action Planning Team, data collection and analysis, reporting, and planning. Patricia Proctor, Esq. leads the faculty in civil discourse and voter education programming. Stephen Tipler works with Tootie Carter, Johnny Bradley, and Eryn Roles to maintain our early voting precinct.

The identification of campus stakeholders and new partners is an ongoing endeavor, reflecting the spirit of participatory democracy that defines the culture of the Voter Friendly Campus Planning Team.

The College of Business, the College of Engineering and Computer Science, the College of Health Professions, the School of Medicine, and the School of Pharmacy will each be asked to select a faculty member to participate in National Voter Registration Day activities. Those faculty will be urged to network with other faculty and with students in their colleges from National Voter Registration Day until Election Day in an effort to elevate student turnout. These academic units have been selected because, according to Marshall's 2020 NSLVE report, students enrolled in them voted at rates lower than the institution's average in 2020. The support and involvement of these faculty will be solicited through personal contact with the Deans of those academic units.

Marshall Athletics serve as an example of the maturation of democratic culture on our campus. The Student Athlete Advisory Committee was extensively involved in 2022 National Voter Registration Day tabling events. And they remain committed to playing a key role in the 2024 National Voter Registration Day efforts, as well. More recently, the work of Jaylene Berrien, who serves as the Director of Student-Athlete Holistic Programming, has extended civic programming for athletes. One example was their February 2024 "Your Role in Civic Engagement" program that emphasized electoral participation alongside volunteerism, as well as activism and advocacy as actions improving the quality of life in one's community. Marshall football players were registered to vote at this event, aided by the presence of the Cabell County Clerk, Scott Caserta, who appeared on the program and brought a voting machine that students could examine and familiarize themselves with in advance of election day.

Another cohort seeking to extend its participation in Voter Friendly Campus endeavors comes from Fraternities and Sororities. As of May 2024, Corey Cunningham, Marshall's Coordinator of Fraternity and Sorority Life has joined the Planning Team so that students from Greek letter organizations can more seamlessly lend their support to our efforts and share information about voter registration processes and election issues.

The Voter Friendly Campus Planning Team is in regular communication through email and through Teams, with face-to-face meetings in 2023 taking place every two weeks. Email exchanges are typically initiated by Kacy Lovelace and Montserrat Miller.

There has been minimal stakeholder turnover since our efforts began in 2020. Where individuals have stepped aside, others in their units have risen to the occasion. This has particularly been the case with respect to University Libraries, where the spirit of participatory democracy is particularly strong. Second-generation team members Diane Palmieri and Jamie Mathis, for example, have played an extremely important role in off-year election work and are especially well-positioned to assist in coordinating and supervising part-time student assistants.<sup>1</sup> Some of these students, it is anticipated, may become regular staff members in the future, thus contributing to the embedding of the culture of democratic practice moving forward.

The Voter Friendly Campus Planning Team's current co-chairs are both faculty members. The assumption of leadership roles has thus far been voluntary. Were that no longer the case, upper administration could make appointments to chair, or co-chair the initiative.

## COMMITMENT AND LANDSCAPE

Marshall University's institutional commitment to civic learning and democratic engagement is evidenced in its Mission Statement, its Vision Statement, in the Marshall Creed, in its Core Curriculum, its programming priorities, and in administrative, faculty, staff, and student culture. There is a significant and



highly visible commitment on the part of the President, who has signed the ALL IN Presidents' Commitment to Full Student Voter Participation. The President's commitment to community engagement reverberates across campus. The commitment extends through the institutional hierarchy to administrators, faculty, staff, and students and is highly visible both internally and externally. Civic learning and democratic engagement are prioritized in both the curriculum and in co-curricular initiatives.

Marshall University's **Mission Statement** references the symbiotic relationship between higher education and a vibrant and pluralistic civil society in several respects. Note, especially, the italicized portions of the text below:

"Marshall University is a public comprehensive university with a rich history as one of the oldest institutions of higher learning in West Virginia. Founded in 1837 and named after Chief Justice John Marshall, definer of the Constitution, Marshall University advances the public good through innovative, accredited educational programs. Marshall University's mission, inspired by our Vision and Creed, includes a commitment to:

- Offer a wide range of high quality, affordable, and accessible undergraduate, graduate, and professional *education that prepares students to think, learn, work, and live in an evolving global society.*
- Create opportunities and experiences to foster *understanding and appreciation of the rich diversity of thought and culture.*
- Maintain a dynamic intellectual, artistic, and cultural life by promoting and supporting research and creative activities by undergraduates, graduates, and faculty.
- *Contribute to the quality of life of the community, region, and beyond through applied research, economic development, health care, and cultural enrichment.*
- *Cultivate the development of an inclusive, just, and equitable community.*"<sup>2</sup>

Marshall's **Vision Statement** emphasizes a strong connection between the work of the university and a broader sense of public wellbeing, asserting that Marshall University seeks "to inspire learning and creativity that ignites the mind, nurtures the spirit, and fulfills the promise of a better future."<sup>3</sup>

The **Marshall Creed** goes a step further by setting forth ideals of civility, civic commitment, and democratic engagement.

"The students, faculty, and staff of Marshall University pledge to pursue the development of our intellects and the expansion of knowledge, and to *devote ourselves to defending individual rights and exercising civic responsibility.*

We are an educational community in which all members work together to promote and strengthen teaching and learning; *an open community uncompromisingly protecting freedom of thought, belief and expression; a civil community treating all individuals and groups with consideration, decency, and respect, and expressing disagreements in rational ways; a responsible community accepting obligations and following behavioral guidelines designed to support*

*the common good; a safe community respecting each other's rights, privacy and property; a well community respecting and promoting physical and emotional health; an ethical community reflecting honesty, integrity and fairness in both academic and extracurricular activities; a pluralistic community celebrating and learning from our diversity; a socially conscious community acting as citizens of the world and seeking to contribute to the betterment of people and their environments; and a judicious community remaining alert to the threats posed by hatred, intolerance and other injustices and ever-prepared to correct them.*"<sup>4</sup>

Marshall University's **Core Curriculum** (general education requirement) is built around nine domains of critical thinking, all of which relate directly to the skills and values upon which democratic political cultures are based. These nine domains of critical thinking are: "communication fluency, creative thinking, **ethical and civic thinking**, information literacy, integrative thinking, intercultural thinking, inquiry-based thinking, metacognitive thinking, and quantitative thinking."<sup>5</sup>

Illiteracy in any of these domains threatens democracy because democratic engagement depends upon the ability of citizens to wrestle with complex problems, exhibit tolerance of cultural differences, engage in self-reflection, make thoughtful and informed decisions about both quantitative and qualitative information in the voting booth, engage in reasoned debate within representative bodies, and formulate creative grassroots efforts to address social challenges.

Marshall University policy UPAA-3 mandates that all course syllabi list which of the nine domains are among the learning outcomes. Presented in the form of a grid, the domains are set forth and aligned with how the skillset will be practiced and how it will be assessed in the course. All programs at the university undergo an annual assessment process and submit an annual Assessment Report. All programs also undergo a Five-Year Review process, which allows departments to fine tune their course offerings to better support the relevant domains of critical thinking for that discipline.

These policies apply to face-to-face and online classes, as well as all of Marshall's campuses in Huntington, South Charleston, Point Pleasant, and Beaver, West Virginia.

Marshall University's commitments to civic learning and democratic engagement are also evidenced in its **programming priorities**.

### **John Deaver Drinko Academy**

The John Deaver Drinko Academy for American Political Institutions and Civic Culture, established in 1994, has worked for three decades to encourage initiatives that engender public commitment to civic engagement as a means of strengthening our democracy. Funded primarily through private donations, the Drinko Academy engages in program support and development, hosts special events and confers citizenship awards, and sponsors scholarship, creative expression, and community projects that enrich the character and tenor of civil society. Reporting directly to the Office of the President, the Drinko Academy –along with the Simon Perry Center for Constitutional Democracy and the



## Simon Perry Center for Constitutional Democracy

The tremendous success in terms of initiatives and outreach on the part of the Simon Perry Center for Constitutional Democracy, established in 2011, serves as further evidence of Marshall University's commitment to civic learning and democratic engagement as a **programming priority**.

The Simon Perry Center, with funding from the West Virginia Humanities Council, organizes the *Amicus Curiae* Lecture Series, Marshall University's single most successful and high-profile civic learning outreach program. *Amicus Curiae* lecturers address critical questions about the history of, and contemporary challenges to, our constitutional system of government. Typically, two or three nationally recognized authors, scholars, and/or jurists per semester deliver lectures to audiences, averaging 300 people. Attendees include faculty, staff, and students, along with attorneys earning Continuing Legal Education credits, local high school social studies students, community members, and individuals from area assisted living facilities. The lectures are free and open to the public and they are recorded, edited, and later broadcast on West Virginia Public Television. Audience response forms collected at each lecture offer the Simon Perry Center an opportunity to gauge the effectiveness of the programming. The *Amicus Curiae* Lecture Series is one of the most successful ways in which Marshall University communicates its commitment to civic learning and democratic engagement to external audiences.<sup>8</sup>

College of Arts and Media— annually organizes what has become a more than month-long celebration of the ratification of the U.S. Constitution. It sponsors a range of programs designed to reinforce respect for the rule of law and elevate civic literacy levels among campus and community constituencies.<sup>6</sup>

Examples of the way in which the Drinko Academy has worked to organize and sponsor civic programs abound. One of those efforts took shape during the pandemic and has since to become an institutional tradition. In 2020, the Drinko Academy worked collaboratively with other units on campus and in the community—including the Huntington Area League of Women Voters, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, and the Office of the Secretary of State of West Virginia—to present programming celebrating the ratification of the 19th Amendment to the Constitution that guaranteed women's right to vote in the United States. Campus partners in this endeavor included the Simon Perry Center for Constitutional Democracy, the Dr. Carter G. Woodson Lyceum, the Department of History, University Libraries, University Communications, the School of Music, the Theatre Department, Student Affairs, the Women's and Gender Studies Minor program, and the Women's and Gender Center. The Women's and Gender Center provided materials and staffing for voter registration tables at all Marshall University Women's Suffrage Centennial programs over the course of the 2019-2020 academic year.<sup>7</sup>

Since 2020, the Drinko Academy and the Simon Perry Center have worked to coordinate annual programming for Women's Equality Day (August 26th) presenting films, panel discussions, and various other programs about women's exercise of the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. These programs have been all presented in collaboration with the League of Women Voters. The 2023 Women's Equality Day program took the form of a luncheon and panel discussion on the topic: "Women and U.S. Politics: A New Era?"

The Drinko Academy organizes annual National Voter Registration Day tables on the Memorial Student Center Plaza and educational programming on U.S. Constitution and Citizenship Day. In addition to these established endeavors, the Drinko Academy is partnering with the League of Women Voters of the Huntington Area, with Marshall's Women's and Gender Center and with the Honors College to offer a candidate forum on campus on October 8th.

The 2023-2024 *Amicus Curiae* lecture series featured five programs. The first was presented by Kermit Roosevelt, III, the David Berger Professor for the Administration of Justice at the University of Pennsylvania Carey Law School and author of the 2022 University of Chicago Press book *The Nation that Never Was: Reconstructing America's Story*. Roosevelt spoke in defense of a new periodization of American history that emphasizes the Emancipation Proclamation and the post-Civil War constitutional amendments as the true starting points of this country's commitment to freedom and justice for all. The second was presented by investigative journalist for *The New York Times*, Philip Shenon, author of the award-winning *A Cruel and Shocking Act: Sixty Years After the Kennedy Assassination* (Henry Holt, 2013). Shenon's presentation involved a careful review of conspiracy theories that emphasized and modeled rationalist, rather than irrationalist thinking, about history and politics. The third lecture was delivered by the Honorable Richard Gergel, U.S. District Court for the District of South Carolina, author of *Unexampled Courage: The Blinding of Sgt. Isaac Woodard and the Awakening of America*. Gergel's lecture offered a riveting account of how Woodard's 1946 brutal victimization at the hands of South Carolina public safety officials inspired a series of landmark civil rights decisions that led to *Brown v. Board of Education*. The fourth lecture was presented by Peter Hanson, Associate Professor of Political Science from Grinnell College and director of the Grinnell College National Poll. Hanson's presentation analyzed the deleterious impact of hyper-partisanship has had on the U.S. Congress and proffered various reform propositions that might counteract the extreme political polarization crippling the legislative branch of government. The fifth lecture was presented by Peter S. Canellos, managing editor for enterprise at POLITICO and author of the 2021 Simon & Schuster book, *The Great Dissenter: The Story of John Marshall Harlan, America's Judicial Hero*.

Canellos's presentation traced the life history of an inspiring figure in American judicial history that serves to impart hope about the arc of the moral universe bending toward justice in our country.

Two of the *Amicus Curiae* lectures scheduled for Fall 2024 will further contribute to Marshall's voter education efforts in the leadup to the November election. Historian Elisabeth Griffith, author of *Formidable: American Women and the Fight for Equality, 1920-2020*, will offer a Women's Equality Day lecture on August 29th. Also, historian and eminent scholar of the early national period of American History, Denver Brunzman, will lecture on September 17th, for U.S. Constitution and Citizenship Day.

The impact of the *Amicus Curiae* Lecture Series extends beyond Huntington, frequently drawing audience members from the Charleston area, and from areas where Marshall's other campuses are located. The broadcast of its lectures on West Virginia Public Television further amplifies its impact, reaching audiences from around the state.

The Simon Perry Center also offers two other **programs that illustrate Marshall University's commitment to civic learning and democratic engagement**. The first of these is the Dan O'Hanlon Essay Competition, which invites students to grapple with burning questions about our contemporary political system. In 2022, the essay prompt was: "Should the U.S. Constitution guarantee equal rights for women?" In 2023, the essay prompt was: "The Framers of the U.S. Constitution created a government designed to control the threat of political violence. Yet, in 2023, the county is experiencing extreme polarization and ongoing political violence. What should

be done to deal with these problems and protect our democracy? And what role do civil rights and liberties play in any solution?" In previous years, prompts have dealt with issues related to free speech on college campuses, with the continued utility of the electoral college, and with the 2010 Citizens United U.S. Supreme Court case.<sup>9</sup>

The second Simon Perry Center program evidencing the institution's commitment to civic learning and democratic engagement is the Interdisciplinary Minor in Constitutional Democracy. The program "is designed to promote the study of the U.S. Constitution, the Supreme Court, the legal application of the Constitution, and U.S. politics and governance."<sup>10</sup> Popular among undergraduates preparing to study the law, the Minor in Constitutional Democracy offers provides any and all students at Marshall an opportunity to take courses focusing on civic learning and democratic engagement.

### Court on Campus Program

Working in a collaborative partnership, the Drinko Academy, the Simon Perry Center, and the Office of the President regularly host Court on Campus programs that are designed to advance civic literacy, model civil discourse, and underpin respect for the rule of law. These programs have involved the Supreme Court of Appeals of West Virginia holding oral argument sessions on the main campus with large groups of faculty, staff, students, and community members in attendance. Temporarily suspended with the onset of the pandemic in 2020, the Court on Campus program is returned with a 4th Circuit Federal Court of Appeals oral argument session in March of 2023 and a Supreme Court of Appeals of West Virginia oral argument session during Constitution Week in September of 2023.





### First Amendment Forum

As part of the 2023 U.S. Constitution Celebration, the Office of the President, the Simon Perry Center, and the Drinko Academy joined together to present a First Amendment Forum entitled “Navigating Free Speech at a Public University.” The program involved a presentation by Ronnie London, Esq., General Counsel for F.I.R.E. Highly relevant, informative, and very well attended, the forum served as further evidence of the university’s **programmatic commitment to civic learning and democratic engagement.**

### The Dr. Carter G. Woodson Lyceum

The Dr. Carter G. Woodson Lyceum is another initiative through which the institution communicates its programmatic commitment to civic learning and democratic engagement to both internal and external audiences. Among its many undertakings, the Woodson Lyceum coordinates Black History Month programming at the university. The Lyceum’s recent programs have included annual Carter G. Woodson lectures by nationally recognized figures such as: Dr. Carla Hayden, U.S. Librarian of Congress; Dr. Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, Chair of the Department of History at Harvard University; Dr. Jerome M. Adams, former U.S. Surgeon General; Dr. William Turner, Professor emeritus of Black and Appalachian Studies at Berea College; and, Brent Leggs, Senior Vice-President at the National Trust for Historic Places. Each of these distinguished speakers addressed issues related to history, civic learning, and democratic engagement. Most notably, Dr. Higginbotham’s 2020 presentation, part of the university’s Women’s Suffrage Centennial celebration, was entitled “African Americans and the Vote,” and addressed the complex histories of both the 15th and the 19th amendments to the U.S. Constitution and the impediments to African American access to the ballot over the course of the last 150 years.<sup>11</sup>

The Lyceum’s annual Carter G. Woodson Lectures have attracted sizeable face-to-face and online audiences comprised of faculty, staff, and students, along with members of the public, elected officials, and state and federal government representatives. The Lyceum’s Black History Month programming also includes poster design contests for students on Marshall’s campus and for grades K-12 in public schools. The Lyceum plays a very significant role in outreach and collaboration with a wide variety of constituencies in the community. In 2023, the Woodson Lyceum offered its fifth Black History Institute summer study program for public school teachers; and in past years, it has also offered a Summer High School Journalism workshop on campus.<sup>12</sup>

The activities and programs of the Drinko Academy, the Simon Perry Center, and the Woodson Lyceum are supported by the President and by senior administrators, demonstrating a clear commitment on the part of institution’s leadership to civic learning and democratic engagement.

### Center for Teaching and Learning

The Center for Teaching and Learning oversees the institution’s curricular efforts to increase civic engagement through promoting the pedagogies associated with Community Based Learning courses. The CBL Director is Dr. Britani Black. CBL pedagogies “combine academic theory with community engagement to enhance student learning by offering hands on-experience outside the classroom.”<sup>13</sup>





Among the goals of the CBL program are: “To encourage civic engagement, ethical development, appreciation for diversity, and deeply integrated learning among students at all levels in all disciplines; to enhance the quality of teaching, assure the integrity of the curriculum, and expand pedagogical resources through faculty development in experiential, community-based learning; to establish constructive partnerships between the community and higher education in order to alleviate social, economic, and environmental adversity and to enrich the quality of community life both on and off campus; and, to enlarge the scope and application of research in higher education and to acknowledge the community’s role in the academic enterprise by facilitating community-based action research projects and supporting the dissemination of research results.”<sup>14</sup>

The CORTEX program is another example of Marshall University’s commitment to democratic engagement. Housed in the Center for Teaching and Learning, CORTEX faculty experts offer assistance in community problem solving. Projects have included: “optimizing garbage collection in the City of Huntington, contributing to the production of a Revitalization Business Plan for the Keith Albee Performing Arts Center, Patrol Zone Realignment for the Huntington Police Department, and recommendations related to Curbside Recycling.”<sup>15</sup> Faculty participating in CORTEX projects serve as important role models for students whose civic educations must emphasize the duties that citizens in a democracy have to serve their communities.

### Higher Learning Commission Quality Initiative

Other equally significant programming priorities at Marshall coming from the Office of Academic Affairs signal institutional commitment to civic learning and democratic engagement.

In Fall 2022, the university entered into a three-year HLC Quality Initiative cycle entitled: “Building a Stronger and More Inclusive Marshall Community.” Programming in each of the three years has been built around a theme. The year one (2022-2023) theme is “Complexities of Identity”; the year two (2023-2024) theme is “Building Bridges”; and the year three (2024-2025) theme is: “Embracing and Celebrating our Differences.”

The Quality Initiative involves three goals:

- to increase students’ readiness to work and live in a global and/or otherwise diverse community by providing them opportunities to grow and learn through contact with others who come from cultures, races, or backgrounds different than their own;
- to increase access to the university by reducing barriers that disproportionately disadvantage people from underserved communities and provide support needed for success;
- to promote student learning through outreach to the community in such high impact practices as community-based learning and research.





The HLC Quality Initiative has built assessment tools and strategies into its plan. The data generated will enable us to better understand what we need to do on campus to improve access for underrepresented groups, as well as how to better engage civically with the community that surrounds our campus.

### University Leadership

**The culture of commitment to civic learning and democratic engagement that is patently observable at Marshall University in its programmatic priorities is also exemplified by the University's leadership and by the formal structures of democratic engagement at the administrative level.**

Marshall University's 38th President, Brad D. Smith, is firmly committed to civic learning, democratic engagement, and civil discourse. Assuming the mantle of the Presidency on January 1, 2022, Smith has sought to build on his predecessors' efforts to embrace a more visible and meaningful role for the university in the community. He is personally invested in the expansion of Marshall's role in addressing community challenges, in regional economic development, and in meeting the needs of a more broadly conceptualized future audience for higher education.

The university's official engagement with democratic processes at the local, state, regional, and federal levels are coordinated through the Office of External Affairs. Charlotte Weber serves as Vice President for Government Relations and Sara Payne Scarbro serves as Associate Vice President for Government Relations. Weber facilitates institutional collaboration with federal officials and Payne Scarbro facilitates collaboration with West Virginia state and regional officials, the Governor's Office, the Legislature, and leaders in the business and non-profit communities.<sup>16</sup> Together, Weber and Payne Scarbro facilitate regular opportunities for faculty, staff, and student contact with state and federal officials. Faculty and administrative lobbying efforts, such as those undertaken by the Drinko Academy and the Simon Perry Center to fund the American History for Freedom Program and to pass the American Civics Education Act, are mediated through them.

It is worth noting that the Office of External Affairs exemplifies the broader role Marshall University plays in helping to preserve and protect our system of democratic self-government. Scholars of comparative democratic systems assert that democracy can only function where it rests on a well-developed civil society; that is, the

"terrain between the state and the private realm where individuals come together to collectively pursue public affairs."<sup>17</sup> A rich civil society serves as a training ground for leaders, inculcates habits of self-government, facilitates networking, and generates creative public policy solutions that democratic systems depend upon. The establishment of the Office of External Affairs patently demonstrates that the university's commitment to democratic engagement is not simply theoretical but also a matter of active and collaborative participation in the public realm.

There are any number of faculty members and program directors whose community engagement work further enriches the civil society upon which our democracy depends. Faculty, staff, and administrators serve on boards of charitable foundations and professional organizations and assume leadership roles in many realms. Patricia Proctor, Esq., the Founding Director of the Simon Perry Center, for example, has served as President of the Huntington Museum of Art Board of Trustees, on the West Virginia Humanities Council, and on the Board of West Virginia Public Broadcasting. Dr. Kelli Johnson has served on the board of directors of the West Virginia Humanities Council, the Fairfield Development Corporation, Coalfield Development Corporation and the Huntington Human Relations Commission. She is also a member of Mayor Steve Williams's Diversity Advisory Committee. Proctor's and Johnson's community engagement activities, along with those of many other members of the faculty, staff, and administration, further demonstrate that the university's commitment to democratic engagement extends beyond the academic or theoretical realm.

In July of 2021, Marshall University hired Dr. Cicero Fain, III as a Visiting Diversity Scholar. His duties include the responsibility to interact with local and state leaders in the area of minority affairs. Dr. Fain's work represents another expression of formal democratic engagement at Marshall University, focused on the past, present, and future of the Black Fairfield neighborhood that is located immediately adjacent to the main Huntington campus. Dr. Fain's award-winning University of Illinois Press book, *Black Huntington: An Appalachian Story*, was selected as one of the two common texts for the HLC Quality Initiative year one Complexities of Identity programming cycle. In October of 2022, Dr. Fain was named Assistant Provost for Inclusive Excellence. In this position, he has continued his work to redefine Marshall's relationship to the Fairfield neighborhood, working directly with the full panoply of civic organizations representing that vital community.

## MU Libraries

In addition to supporting the programming initiatives detailed above, Marshall University Libraries is committed to maintaining online resources for students through the HERDVOTES website, to managing the university's participation in the Students Learn Students Vote Coalition, and to helping staff and organize face-to-face voter registration/voter education initiatives. It has also produced a library research guide that serves the efforts of the Voter Friendly initiative. Drinko Library, the main library, also served as an early voting location for the 2024 Primary Election and will act as an early voting location for the 2024 General Election, as well.

## Summary

**There are many examples of Marshall University's programmatic commitment to civic learning and democratic engagement.** From the Medical School to the Pharmacy School, to the Social Work Program, to Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, to the Women's and Gender Center, to the Pre-Law Club and the Political Science Honorary, there is a culture of civic commitment that faculty impart to students and/or that students bring to campus of their own accord, inspiring faculty to collaborate in the realization of a myriad civic goals. That culture is evidenced individually among the staff and collectively through Staff Council civic projects. It is evidenced in the Student Government Association's work to make early voting available on campus and in the work of Student Affairs to create co-curricular resumes demonstrating civic education and involvement and to provide new tools such as TURBOVote. It is evidenced in the Department of Political Science's various Legislative internship programs and in the Faculty Senate's organization of Legislative fora for the university community. The university's institutional culture of participatory democracy is reflected in its commitment to shared governance and its current efforts to redefine and reinvigorate what that means.

Marshall University's commitment as an institution to improving civic learning and democratic engagement is strong and clearly visible to both external and internal audiences. While civic learning and democratic engagement take many forms, informed citizen participation in the electoral process is one of the most vital components of successful self-government. Low voter registration and voter turnout rates are a threat to democracy and must be addressed from multiple angles; higher education has a vital role to play in inculcating habits of responsible citizenship. The institution's Mission, Vision, and Creed statements, the basic building blocks of its Core Curriculum, its programming priorities, its civic cultural orientation, its leadership and formal structures of democratic engagement all collectively prepare Marshall to undertake new efforts to advance student electoral participation.

## Internal and External Barriers

The highly favorable landscape for democratic engagement and civic learning at Marshall is not free of challenges emanating from within and beyond the institution. Internally, students, faculty, and staff alike are faced with an expanding set of demands upon their time. Undergraduates almost universally need to work part-time



jobs in order to afford the cost of college, while their professors face the need to publish or perish alongside their heavy teaching loads (typically four courses per semester/phasing now with Marshall's R2 status to a three and three load). Meanwhile staff are working harder than ever to meet the goals set forth by President Smith transform the university into a leaner, more responsive, and more technologically sophisticated node in the transnational network that is higher education. Surmounting the time-crunch impediment that everyone faces involves significant investment in face-to-face networking one student, one colleague, and one staff partner at a time. In addressing this internal challenge, gestures of goodwill and demonstrations of respect and support for others' work and programming initiatives are vital because they help to build the internal culture of mutual support upon which democratic engagement and civic learning depends.

Externally, political polarization, the vitriolic tenor of our public discourse about people running for office, policy issues, and public institutions, declining levels of civic and media literacy, and growing attachments to conspiratorial frameworks have combined to complicate the work of democratic engagement and civic learning at Marshall. These broader cultural and sociopolitical trends impact students, faculty, and staff in at least two notable respects. In some, they engender disquieting levels of hostility toward those holding viewpoints other than their own. In others, they cause a conscious withdrawal from politics. Here, modelling civil discourse in the discussion of contentious issues, and operationalizing the institution's vision statement both work to counteract the insidious impact of these external challenges. Marshall's vision, "to inspire learning and creativity that ignites the mind, nurtures the spirit, and fulfills the promise of a better future," serves as a clarion call to revitalize political discourse on campus and to redouble our efforts to nurture the spirit of open-minded curiosity upon which all scholarly pursuit depends, and which remains central to the effective exercise of the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.



## GOALS

### Vision:

- to increase overall student voting rates;
- to elevate the voting rates of students of color to the same rate as white students;
- to increase voting rates in fields where voting rates do not match the campus-wide voting rate;
- to strengthen the sense of civic responsibility on Marshall's campuses;
- to strengthen voter registration integration into student life by meeting students where they are and making voter registration information available in numerous places on campus;
- to strengthen the integration of Marshall University's "ethical and civic thinking" learning outcome into the general education curriculum;
- and, to improve our capacity to foster democratic engagement.

### Long-Term Goals (six to eight years)

**General election student voting rates:** By 2030, the institution's student voting rates will increase by 6% over 2024 turnout levels, with students of color voting at the same rate as white students.

**Midterm election student voting rates:** By 2032, the institution's student voting rates will increase by 6% over 2026 turnout levels, with students of color voting at the same rate as white students.

**Civic learning and democratic engagement:** By 2030, the institution will take measures to emphasize and specifically measure "ethical and civic thinking" as a general education course learning outcome.

### Short-Term Goals (two to five years)

**General election student voting rates:** By 2024, the institution's student voting rates will increase by 6% over 2020 turnout levels, with students of color voting at the same rate as white students.

**Midterm election student voting rates:** By 2026, the institution's student voting rates will increase by 6% over 2022 turnout levels, with students of color voting at the same rate as white students.

**Civic learning and democratic engagement:** By 2024, Student Government Association representatives will join the Voter Friendly Campus Team, and the institution will further increase the number of students participating in Marshall's voter registration initiatives and play an instrumental role in helping to develop our short and long term, student-centric goals. By 2026, student members will make up one third of the Voter Friendly Campus Team and one half of voter registration initiative volunteers, with an emphasis on recruiting students from minority populations.

**Civic learning and democratic engagement:** By 2026, the School of Medicine, the Pharmacy School, and the Colleges of Business, Science, Health Professions, and Engineering and Computer Science will each have faculty and students participating in the Voter Friendly Campus initiative.

**Civic learning and democratic engagement:** By 2026, at least one member of the Voter Friendly Campus Planning Team will be involved in UNI 100 planning and assessment processes.

**Civic learning and democratic engagement:** By 2026, at least one member of the Voter Friendly Campus Planning team will be involved in the review of the institution's general education requirements.

**Civic education and democratic participation:** By 2024, the Voter Friendly Campus Planning Team will develop comprehensive training resources for committee members and volunteers, enhancing our capacity to foster democratic engagement, with a target completion rate of 95% by 2026.

### Progress Toward Last Plan's Goals

While we are still working toward achieving the long-term goals we set with respect to student voting rates at Marshall in 2028 and 2030, we can report progress in terms of our long-term civic learning and democratic engagement goals. Electoral engagement will be added as a learning outcome to all UNI 100 class syllabi as of the Fall 2024 semester. The case for emphasizing and specifically measuring "ethical and civic thinking" in our core curriculum has been recently made to the Chair of the General Education Task Force, with follow up and further elaboration of that case forthcoming this summer from the Executive Director of the Drinko Academy.

There is also progress to report with respect to the short-term goals we set in the previous plan. We have built a stronger relationship with Marshall's Student Government Association, a representative of which now serves, along with two other students, on the Voter Friendly Campus Planning Team. We have also secured the support of the newly elected Student Government President and Vice-President, who will be participating in our celebration of National Voter Registration Day on September 17th. The incoming Student Government Vice-President has agreed to narrate the voter registration video that has been added to all UNI 100 classes, urging first-time freshman to use vote.org resources to check, and if necessary, amend their voter registration records, and to vote, if eligible to do so, in our early voting precinct.

### Resources

In order to achieve these long-term and short-term goals, the Voter Friendly Campus Planning Team will need to depend upon the allocation of adequate fiscal and human resources. Democratic engagement and civic learning programming is supported across the institution from a range of programs and initiatives, while face-to-face voter registration/voter information costs are absorbed from the Drinko Academy's regular budget line. It will be vital that the Office of the President remain informed of the costs involved and inclined to support those efforts if unanticipated expenses occur. The ongoing commitment of units such as University Libraries to supporting faculty and staff investments of time and intellectual capital in the effort are every bit as urgent as are fiscal allocations.



## STRATEGY

Marshall University is a campus that is firmly committed to civic learning, democratic engagement, and voter participation by students, faculty, and staff, and this commitment has only grown since we began our increased voter registration efforts a few years ago. Marshall's curricular commitment to ethical and civic learning as a general education learning outcome is longstanding. So, too, is its curricular and programmatic commitment to civic literacy and civil discourse. While the student voting rate climbed dramatically from 2016 to 2020, much work remains in order to build confidence in democracy and to teach competency in the skills upon which democratic self-government depends. Ultimately, every member of the Marshall institutional family should actively exercise the rights, and shoulder the responsibilities, of democracy. In working toward that ideal, and in seeking to meet our more specific long-term and short terms goals, the following strategies have been identified:

- The Voter Friendly Campus Planning Team will work to foster civic consciousness among all recognized student organizations by involving their membership in voter registration and voter education efforts on campus. There will need to be more outreach to fraternities and sororities in order increase the number of students participating in voter registration/voter education events. Expansion will necessitate a systematization of the processes through which tables and chairs, popup tents, and tabling materials are set up, students are scheduled to staff, and then all infrastructure is broken down and returned to storage.
- There will have to be more formalized collaboration with the Deans, Associate Deans, and Student Government Senators from every college in the university in order to design appropriate responses to data set forth in Marshall's NSLVE report.
- Additionally, departments that have been identified with lower voting rates than the Marshall University average, will receive targeted voter registration efforts, and we will begin to employ multiple, simultaneous voter registration events in the lead up to the 2024 General Election, which will include locations like the Brad D. Smith Center for Business and Innovation and the Arthur Weisberg Family Applied Engineering Complex, where the Department of Computer Science is housed.

- Hold voter registration events at Marshall University Football games.
- Increase the number of students on the Voter Friendly Campus Planning Team and involve them in the goal planning process.
- Develop a training tool to educate student workers and other members of our coalition for more effective voter registration engagement.
- Expand partnership with SLSV and their program Ask Every Student and increase the use of available resources through these and other partnerships. Although we were not aware that we were doing so, we have been employing many of the strategies outlined by the Ask Every Student “integrate, execute, and institutionalize” framework, including academic integration and strategic institutional partnerships. Now, however, we have committed to mindfully following the Ask Every Student strategic approaches with an increased emphasis on student life integration and student leadership opportunities, along with a deeper commitment to undertaking a more comprehensive accounting of the types of voter registration engagements that our coalition and volunteers encounter.
- Participate in National Voter Education Week and increase participation in Civic Takeover of Holidays beyond National Voter Registration Day, including Vote Early Day and Election Hero Day.
- Further support from university leadership will need to be secured by the Voter Friendly Campus Planning Team in order to have a seat at the table where general education curricular decisions are made so that the case for emphasizing ethical and civic thinking outcomes in general education courses can be made. This strategy is informed by peer-reviewed research, which indicates that student voter outreach efforts to other students can increase turnout.
- Ask President Smith to send a letter to students each semester, in election and non-election years, emphasizing the importance of civic responsibility and participation.
- Greater resources will need to be allocated in order to support the Voter Friendly Campus initiatives, particularly in terms of part-time student assistants to coordinate student outreach. Through the use of Drinko Academy funds as well as the Federal Work Study Program, we hope to employ between 5 and 10 students to assist us with our efforts during the Fall 2024 semester. We hope to continue employing students as often as funding is available or can be found.

## NSLVE

The NSLVE report dated October 2021 indicates that Marshall’s student voting rate was 63.9%, an increase of 12.8% between 2016 and 2020. Yet the voting rate at Marshall in 2020 was still 2.1% below the national average for all institutions included in the data set.

Marshall’s NSLVE report thus points to notable successes, but also to ongoing challenges that spur us to continue our work. Marshall registration rates in 2016, 2018, and 2020 were above the average of all institutions included in the NSLVE data set. Our 2020

registration rate of 87.8%, represents a 3.5% increase over the 2016 rate and a 4.7% increase over the 2018 rate. This suggests that efforts to register students to vote on campus have proved successful and should be further expanded to achieve even better results.

Marshall’s yield rates (voting rates of registered students) in 2016, 2018, and 2020 were below the average of all institutions included in the NSLV data set, even though turnout of registered voters at Marshall climbed between the general elections of 2016 and 2020 by 12.2%. This suggests that we should continue to expand our efforts to encourage turnout in order to achieve better results. Marshall’s overall voting rates in 2016, 2018, and 2020 have hovered at, or just below, the average of all institutions included in the NSLVE data set. In 2016 it was 51.2%, in 2018 it was 37%, and in 2020, it was 63.9%. The fact that the standard variation in 2020 voting rates across institutions was so wide (from a low of 19% to a high of 89%) makes the 12.8% increase in Marshall’s voting rate from the 2016 general election to the 2020 general election even more impressive. This suggests that we should continue to expand our efforts in order to achieve better results.

NSLVE data indicates that our strategies are working, though clearly, other factors related to national and state politics have concurrently acted to drive up college voting rates across the country. NSLVE data specific to fields of study, however, have led us to further refine our strategy to address colleges and majors within which voting rates in 2020 were below our institutional average. The following academic disciplines were those whose voting rate were below Marshall’s institutional average of 63.9%:

Math	54%
Business, Management, and Marketing:	57%
Computer and Information Sciences:	54%
Health Professions:	60%
Criminal Justice:	61%

Without the NSLVE report, we would be unaware of these disciplinary disparities. Awareness of the variation in voting rate by field of study offers us rich opportunities to target groups whose increased participation will help us to achieve our goals.

The NSLVE report dated September 2022 (up to 2020 data) provides further detail in voting rates at Marshall by race and ethnicity. We can see that voting rates on our campus among students identifying as Black more than doubled between 2018 and 2020 from 23% to 49%. Likewise, voting rates on our campus among students identifying as Hispanic rose between 2018 and 2020 from 33% to 55%. These dramatic increases among students of color indicate that further efforts directed specifically at these populations can yield impressive results.

And finally, the September 2022 NSLVE report confirms the importance of Marshall early voting site, which has clearly facilitated early voting for our students, driving early voting numbers up from 292 in 2014, to 1,025 in 2018, to 2,006. Early voting, in fact, accounts for a significant portion of Marshall’s 12.8% increase in voting rate between 2016 and 2020. Peer-reviewed research supports the connection between establishing a campus early voting site and increased student turnout. We eagerly await 2022 data to see if our efforts remained successful during the midterm elections and beyond.

# EVALUATION

The purpose of this evaluation is to gauge the progress that Marshall University is making toward the Voter Friendly Campus goals we set in our action plan. Since the information contained within the NSLVE is relatively new to us, and this is our first evaluation of the progress that we have made, the NSLVE data is paramount for evaluating that progress and for adjusting our goals and action plan as we receive new data about our civic participation rates on campus. Furthermore, we recognize the significance of leveraging data from resources like HerdVotes and the library research guide to gauge the efficacy of our online offerings. While we have observed limited traffic to the library research guide and encountered challenges with data quality from HerdVotes, these findings have spurred innovative approaches to bolstering and promoting these resources within the university community and beyond.

Evaluating the effectiveness of our efforts to increase student voter engagement will need to be regular and ongoing. Before each election year, we will need to analyze the new NSLVE data that we receive. We want to know if our efforts to increase registration rates and voter turnout are reflected in the actual numbers of students voting. We also want to know if our efforts increase registration from election year to election year. Knowing what method students are using to vote allows us to tailor our registration efforts and to bolster information about preferred voting methods. Demographic information related to age, ethnicity, sex, education level, and field of study inspires new ways of reaching groups who are underrepresented in our efforts and improve our registration rates and voter turnout. We are also evaluating the success of our campus voter outreach efforts, including attendance and types of interaction. Additionally, we will continually evaluate the impact of MU's early voting precinct, the first on-campus early voting precinct in the state of West Virginia and our efforts to spread the word about it on campus.

This evaluation will be carried out by members of our Voter Friendly Campus Team, which is made up of faculty and staff from various departments across campus. This evaluation will then be used by campus organizations and groups who are involved in student voting initiatives. We will aim to complete this evaluation in the Spring of each election year so that we can properly prepare for our Fall initiatives. In addition to the NSLVE report and evaluation of current voter registration initiatives, the following information can assist us in our efforts:

- Website traffic information from HerdVotes and LibGuides.
- Tracking interaction types when engaging in voter registration efforts. What questions are students asking about the voter registration process, i.e., are students asking how they can change their address so that they can vote on campus instead of at home? Gathering this specific data will allow us to better prepare for registration events and better serve our student, staff, and faculty populations.
- Are there any civic initiatives happening on campus that we are not aware of that could serve to increase our campus-wide efforts?

Our vision for a successful, voter friendly campus is one where registration rates continue to climb with each election cycle, and one where actual voter turnout closely matches these registration rates. One of our short-term goals was to increase 2020 student voting rates by 3% over 2018 rates. Through our efforts, student voter registration rates increased by 4.7%. Of those registered students, we also saw a 26.9% increase in voting rates. Of the total student population, there was a 28.3% increase in student voting over 2018 numbers.

Our long-term goals include an increase in the student voting rate of students of color by 6% from 2020 – 2024 and 12% from 2020-2028. From 2018 to 2020, there was an increase in student voting from students of color: 19% Asian, 26% Black, 22% Hispanic, and 31% students of two or more races. We believe that our concentrated voter registration initiative has encouraged these increases and will bolster our efforts in increasing voting rates of students of color.



# REPORTING

The Marshall University Voter Friendly Campus plan is publicly available via the HerdVotes Website as well as the Voter Friendly Campus library research guide (LibGuide). Our NSLVE report also resides in these two publicly accessible locations. Our 2022-2023 plan is also accessible through the All In Campus Democracy Challenge website.

The Voter Friendly Campus plan will be shared with all campus organizations and groups who are involved with student voting as well as with units that may choose to take a bigger role in student voting initiatives in future, like the Division of Student Affairs. We believe that sharing this readily accessible data through our HerdVotes website and our library research guide will give everyone on campus the key student voter information that they need to reach out to groups who are underrepresented in our voting coalition. We have also made our campus community aware of our efforts through our faculty and student campus newsletters, and ever-increasing voter registration marketing efforts on campus.

[www.marshall.edu/quick-facts/](http://www.marshall.edu/quick-facts/)

[www.marshall.edu/irp/institutional-data/](http://www.marshall.edu/irp/institutional-data/)

Student Voting Rates for Marshall University  
NSLVE Campus Report, September 2022



<sup>1</sup>Recognizing the stochastic nature of some human behavior, all Fall 2024 semester part-time student assistant scheduling will feature redundancy.

<sup>2</sup>See: <https://www.marshall.edu/mission/> (accessed 1 May 2024).

<sup>3</sup> See: <https://www.marshall.edu/mission/> (accessed 1 May 2024).

<sup>4</sup>See: <https://www.marshall.edu/mission/> (accessed 1 May 2024).

<sup>5</sup>See: <https://www.marshall.edu/hlcaccreditationreview/files/Marshall-Assurance-Argument-Bookmarked-9-16-2015.pdf> (accessed 2 May 2024).

<sup>6</sup>For a fuller description of Drinko Academy programming related to civic learning and democratic engagement, see: <https://www.marshall.edu/drinko/> (accessed 1 May 2024).

<sup>7</sup>See: <https://www.marshall.edu/womenvote/> and <https://sos.wv.gov/about/Pages/WV19Amend.aspx> (both accessed 1 May 2024).

<sup>8</sup>See: <https://www.marshall.edu/spc/amicus-curiae-lecture-series-on-constitutional-democracy/> (accessed 2 May 2024).

<sup>9</sup>See: <https://www.marshall.edu/spc/about-the-perry-center/> (accessed 2 May 2024).

<sup>10</sup>See: <https://www.marshall.edu/spc/minor-in-constitutional-democracy/> (accessed 2 May 2024).

<sup>11</sup>For a recording of Dr. Higginbotham's 2020 Carter G. Woodson Lecture, see: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KvoFtMSAN90> (accessed 3 May 2024).

<sup>12</sup>See: <https://www.marshall.edu/woodsonlyceum/> (accessed 3 May 2024).

<sup>13</sup>See: <https://www.marshall.edu/ctl/community-engagement/cbl> (accessed 3 May 2024).

<sup>14</sup>See: <https://www.marshall.edu/ctl/community-engagement/cbl> (accessed 3 May 2024).

<sup>15</sup>See: <https://www.marshall.edu/cortex/> (Accessed 3 May 2024).

<sup>16</sup>The Marshall University Faculty Senate also has a Legislative Affairs standing committee that engages directly with elected officials; and a long-time staff member in the Office of the President, Bill Burdette, also acts as a legislative liaison.

<sup>17</sup>Pamela Beth Radcliff, *Making Democratic Citizens in Spain: Civil Society and the Popular Origins of the Transition, 1960-1978* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 2 and Neera Chandhoke, *State and Civil Society: Explorations in Political Theory* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1995), 9.







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