

2024 Action Plan
Marywood University



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

“Marywood University prepares students to seek sustainable solutions for the common good and educates global citizens to live responsibly in an interdependent world.”

-Marywood University Mission Statement

Democratic engagement is extremely important to Marywood University and is represented in our Mission and Core Values. Pacers to the Polls, an initiative that began in Fall 2019 has been woven into the culture of our institution. This initiative is a collaboration between Marywood’s Office of Student Engagement, the University’s Advocacy & Civic Engagement Committee (ACE), and the Student Government Association (SGA). This voter engagement plan was developed based on the ideas, interests, and expertise of the many faculty, staff, and students represented on the ACE Committee and SGA, with the support of the University President.

Pacers to the Polls is working towards one hundred percent student voter participation and has multiple areas of focus, including, but not limited to:

- Emphasis on historically marginalized populations, and promotion of local voter registration opportunities.
- Sharing of information about when and where to vote.
- Hosting voter registration drives.
- Promoting widespread education on voter registration.
- Encouraging students to research and understand their political stances.
- Understanding the barriers to student voting and relieving as many as possible.
- Coordinating Early Election and Election Day turnout through programming and direct assistance.

The current plan will evolve with departments, individual staff and faculty members, students and student organizations, and community organizations.

LEADERSHIP

Voter engagement initiatives at Marywood are coordinated and executed primarily through the Office of Student Engagement. In addition the institution has created a committee, which is composed of students, faculty, and staff to share ideas, collaborate on projects, and work on advocacy and civic engagement initiatives on campus. This committee meets semesterly and is accountable to the University's President.

Membership to the committee is constantly being assessed in order to ensure that all areas of campus are represented. Plans are also in place to ensure that each relevant area has representation and involvement even in the case of staff changes or restructuring.

Students

Ian Kovatch, Undergraduate Student Government President

Kelly Royer, Undergraduate Student Government Representative for Civic Engagement

Jenna Cominsky, Graduate Student Council President

Faculty

Faculty Representative, Department of Social Sciences

Faculty Representative, Science Department

Faculty Representative, Department of Social Work

Faculty Representative, Psychology and Counseling Department

Staff

Kevin Farrell, Director of Student Engagement

Dr. Jeff Kegols, Vice President for the Student Experience

Jordan Houston, Assistant Director of Student Engagement

Tommy Flynn, Coordinator of Student Engagement

Amy Fotta, Director of Community Service and Social Justice

Julie Trott, Assistant Director of Athletics and Recreation

Sheryl Lynn Sochoka, Publication Director (Marketing)

Colleen Diane Campbell, Director of Field Education

Dr. Yerodin Lucas, Executive Director of Institutional Equity & Inclusion

Megan Galko, Director of Alumni Engagement

COMMITMENT

Presidential Commitment

Sister Mary Persico, President of Marywood University, has committed her leadership and support of the Pacers to the Polls movement. She commits to aiding the program by fully engaging students in all elections and voting-related learning opportunities. This makes a statement that Sister Mary Persico is dedicated to full student voter participation, and, by making this visible internally and externally, encourages the campus community to commit themselves to democratic engagement. Sister Mary said, *“I am proud to sign the Higher Education Presidents’ Commitment to Full Student Voter Participation. We are committed to working with campus stakeholders to increase electoral participation in 2020 and beyond. As an institutional leader, I value providing opportunities to empower all eligible voters at Marywood University to register and turnout to vote.”*

Mission Statement

Marywood University’s Mission guides our beliefs that students’ education must prepare them for active and responsible participation in civil society, by stating: *“Marywood University prepares students to seek sustainable solutions for the common good and educates global citizens to live responsibly in an interdependent world.”*

Core Values

The acknowledgment of students’ critical role as participants in society is further evidenced in Marywood’s Core Values including:

- Service - a commitment to promoting social responsibility which fosters community engagement to meet real needs.
- Empowerment - access to education that enables all to achieve their full potential to live as conscientious citizens in a pluralistic society.

Campus-Wide Materials & Opportunities

Voter registration and election information is shared regularly with all students via email by the Dean of Students at the beginning of each semester. Additionally, voter registration opportunities are provided in some fashion at each New Student and Family Orientation, during the weeks of Weeks of Welcome each semester, and throughout the academic year during national voting holidays/registration days.

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

According to Marywood University's Fact Book 2023-2024, the following data describes student demographics as of Fall 2023 this includes all Undergraduate, Graduate, and Doctoral students:

Race/Ethnicity (Total)

White	Black or African American	Hispanic	Asian	American Indian/ Alaska Native	Non-Resident Alien	Two or More Races	Unknown	Total
1,378	44	180	45	6	14	43	40	1,750
78%	2%	10%	2%	>1%	>1%	2%	2%	

Gender (Total)

Men	Women	Total
985	1851	2,836
35%	65%	

Housing Status (Undergraduate Only)

On-Campus	Off-Campus	Total
736	1,138	1874
39.2%	60.8%	

Student Learning Outcomes

Marywood University's commitment to educating for civic engagement is reflected directly in our University Student Learning Outcomes. Specifically, Learning Outcome 3.1: *Personal and Social Responsibility, including Civic knowledge and engagement - local and global.*

Youth Electoral Significance Index

Marywood University is located in Pennsylvania, which is ranked #1 for Governor and Senate races where youth will have the highest impact on the 2024 elections according to the YESI: a further reminder and motivator of the crucial importance of our efforts.

Campus Climate

For the past five years, democratic engagement has become an increasingly visible, celebrated, and recognizable pillar of our campus culture. Examples of that include:

- Marywood University received a Gold Seal from the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge for our Voting Rate (74.7%) in the 2020 Election.
- Marywood University received a Highly Established Action Plan Seal from the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge in 2022.
- Marywood University received a Presidential Commitment Seal from the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge.
- Marywood University was named a Voter Friendly Campus by Fair Elections Center's Campus Vote Project and NASPA for the 2023-2024 school year.

NSLVE REPORT

General Elections	2020	2016	Change
Voting Rate	74.7%	58.3%	+16.4
Voter Registration Rate	86.8%	80.5%	+6.3
Yield Rate	86.0%	72.4%	+13.6
In-Person Voting Rate	50.0%	82.0%	-32
White Student Voting Rate	77.0%	58.0%	+19
Black Student Voting Rate	67.0%	46.0%	+21
Hispanic Student Voting Rate	67.0%	50.0%	+17
Asian Student Voting Rate	49.0%	32.0%	+17
Men's Voting Rate	69.0%	54.0%	+15
Women's Voting Rate	76.0%	56.9%	+19.1

Midterm Elections	2018	2014	Change
Voting Rate	39.1%	17%	+22.1
Voter Registration Rate	76.1%	62.6%	+13.5
Yield Rate	51.4%	27.1%	+24.3
In-Person Voting Rate	85%	93%	-8
White Student Voting Rate	40.6%	16.9%	+23.7
Black Student Voting Rate	32%	N/A	N/A
Hispanic Student Voting Rate	29.1%	10.5%	+18.6
Asian Student Voting Rate	21.5%	N/A	N/A
Men's Voting Rate	37.5%	16.6%	+20.9
Women's Voting Rate	38.5%	15.8%	+22.7

GOALS

Short-Term

- Achieve a Campus voting rate of 80% in 2024.
 - In 2020, Marywood University received a voting rate of 74.7%
- Achieve a voter registration rate of 90% in 2024.
 - In 2020, Marywood University received a voter registration rate of 86.8%
- Achieve Hispanic and Black student voting rate of 70% in 2024.
 - In 2022, Marywood University received a Hispanic and Black student voting rate of 67%
- Achieve Asian student voting rate of 52% in 2024.
 - In 2022, Marywood University received an Asian Student voting rate of 49%
- Get 100 students to complete the ALL IN To Vote Campus Pledge Leaderboard for 2024.
- Achieve Voter-Friendly Campus Designation in 2024.
- Include voter registration information at Pacer Leadership and Planning Day.
- Implement a Voter Education/Registration Week in the Spring 2024 semester.
- Create a partnership with Nativity Miguel, a middle school located on Marywood's campus that primarily serves Latinx and Hispanic students, to promote voter education and access.
- Create programs for National Civic Holidays including Constitution Day, National Voter Registration Day, Vote Early Day, etc.

Long-Term

- Prevent declines in the voter registration rate in order to work towards a voter registration of 95% in 2028.
- Work to decrease the racial and gender turnout gaps resulting in no gaps by 2032.
- Include voter registration and election information in all course syllabi by 2026.

Closing the gaps

- Encourage specialized and identity-based organizations to collaborate with the Office of Student Engagement and hold voter engagement programs to help widen the reach and include marginalized communities.

- These may include Global Unity Club, Womens Empowerment Club, Sexuality & Gender Alliance, Sororities, etc.
- Due to the widening gender voting gap displayed in our NSLVE data, work with men's athletic coaches to increase men's voting rate to equal women's.

Voter Education & Access

- Work with faculty and staff to provide information to their students about Voter Registration, Polling Locations, Mail-in Voting, etc.
- Include voter registration information and election information on course syllabi, Brightspace (Online Learning System), and Pacer Space (University Mobile App)
- Promote transportation options to local polling locations.
- Provide free stamps to students utilizing mail-in ballots.

STRATEGY

The Office of Student Engagement as well as the Advocacy & Civic Engagement Committee (ACE), and the Student Government Association (SGA) will implement the following strategies in order to promote a voter friendly campus:

- Incentivize voting and voter registration with free food, shirts, key chains, and stickers to increase visibility.
- Twice a year, the Office of Student Engagement will have a Voter Registration Table at the involvement fair.
- Offer voter registration assistance to students during major student events.
- Creation of a Voter Education Week for the Spring 2024 Semester with partnerships with Athletics, diversity programming, and the Social Sciences Department to increase voter awareness and registration rates across campus.
- Partner with Nativity Miguel, a middle school located on Marywood's campus, to promote voter registration and awareness at a young age.
- Continual promotion of voter education and resources on the Marywood Office of Student Engagement social media platforms.

Each of these strategies will help us to promote a campus environment that embraces civic engagement. Through programs such as our Voter Education Week and our partnership with Nativity Miguel, we are creating a culture of voter readiness and promoting civic engagement initiatives.

REPORTING

We will share our Action Plan and NSLVE data to both internal and external audiences as follows:

	Action Plan	NSLVE Report
Marywood University Website (Student Engagement Page) https://sites.google.com/maryu.marywood.edu/sga/home	X	X
ALL IN Challenge	X	X
Voter Friendly Campus	X	X
Advocacy & Civic Engagement Committee	X	X
Student Government Association Executive Cabinet	X	X
University Administration (President & Cabinet)	X	X
The Wood Word	X	X
Student Clubs and Organizations	X	
Outcomes Assessment Committee	X	X
Local Media (FOX56, WNEP, Times Leader, etc.)		X

EVALUATION

Our goals will continue to evolve based on the results of our 2022 NSLVE Report and the continual changes to the climate of our campus community. The Office of Student Engagement will update our action plan in real-time as programs take place, with revisions reflecting each program's success or necessary future adjustments. We will use the results of our events and campaigns to determine how to move forward in the future. We have seen that due to our efforts, we have pledged over 100 students to vote and registered countless more students.