MARYWOOD PACERS TO THE POLLS
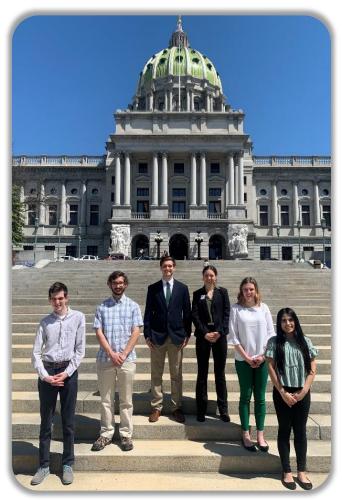
2022 Action Plan
Marywood University

Democratic engagement is extremely important to Marywood University and is represented in our Mission and Core Values. Pacers to the Polls was the beginning of a movement that started in Fall 2019, and has since been woven into the culture and daily operations of our institution. This initiative has been spearheaded by Marywood's Office of Student Engagement, and supported by the University's Advocacy & Civic Engagement (ACE) Committee and 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 ACE and SGA, and with the support of the University's President.

The Pacers to the Polls movement towards full student voter participation has multiple areas of focus, including: emphasis on historically marginalized groups, promotion of the option to register locally, sharing information about when and where to vote, hosting voter registration drives, working voter registration into already established mediums and processes, encouraging students to research and understand their own political stances, understanding the barriers to student voting and relieving as many as we can, and coordination of Early and Election Day turnout through programming and direct assistance.

> "*M*arywood 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*

The current plan will continue to evolve over time to reflect the contributions of new departments, individual staff and faculty members, students and student organizations, and community organizations.

Leadership

Voter engagement work at Marywood University is coordinated and executed primarily through the Office of Student Engagement and the Advocacy & Civic Engagement Committee. This committee that is composed of students, faculty, staff, and community partners was established by and is accountable to the President of the University. This group meets monthly to share ideas, collaborate on projects, and continue to work on breaking down voting barriers.

Students
Austen Miller, Undergraduate Student Government President
Emily Haggerty, Undergraduate Student Government Representative
Jenna Cominsky, Graduate Student Council President

Faculty
Dr. Adam Shprintzen, Assistant Professor, Social Science
Sara Melick, Instructor, Science Department
Lea Dougherty, Instructor of Practice, School of Social Work
Dr. Aniela Scanlon, Assistant Professor, Psychology & Counseling

Staff
Michael Kalage, Director of Student Engagement & Civic Initiatives
Sr. Elizabeth McGill, Executive Director of Student Services
Haleigh Zurek, Assistant Director of Student Engagement
Patrick Joyce, Student Involvement Coordinator
Amy Fotta, Director of Community Service & Social Justice
Nicole Malloy, Assistant Director of Athletics & Recreation
Sheryl Sochoka, Publications Director (Marketing)
Patrick Cowley, Director of Field Education
Dr. Yerodin Lucas, Executive Director of Institutional Equity & Inclusion
Kevin Farrell, Director of Alumni Engagement

Community Partners
Maggie Martinelli, Vice President of Administration & Operations, *Scranton Area Community Foundation*
Scott Thomas, Chief Executive Officer, *Scranton Public Library*

Leadership

To keep ACE Committee members engaged beyond and between monthly meetings, one-pagers are also distributed via email to all members as needed by the Co-Chairs. These documents include timely action items, requests for feedback, professional development opportunities, recognition of recent accomplishments, and more.

To ensure smooth and successful succession of leadership and long-term longevity of our efforts, faculty and staff serve in staggered two-year terms to prevent sudden, widespread turnover. Various staff and student members of the Committee are also ex-oficio members, meaning that the person in that position is expected to be a member of the committee even if the current individual is no longer in the role. The following are ex-oficio members of the ACE Committee:

- *Director of Student Engagement & Civic Initiatives*
- *Executive Director of Student Services*
- *Director of Community Service & Social Justice*
- *Student Government Association President*
- *Student Government Association Sustainability Representative*

Faculty members on the Committee assist in providing feedback and suggestions from an academic perspective, as well as liaising with the Faculty Senate to encourage participation in voter education and turnout efforts and increase in-classroom activities and information sharing.

Staff and student members utilize their respective skills and expertise to coordinate programming, promote collaboration, and volunteer at campus events such as Civic Holidays. Representation from the Office of Equity & Inclusion ensure that we are consistently viewing our efforts through an inclusive and equitable lens and Athletics & Recreation participation will support our upcoming goal of encouraging all Athletic Coaches to sign the ALL IN Coaches Commitment and support our student-athletes in fulfilling their civic duty.

Recently established community organization partnerships will assist with integrating our efforts into the greater community, offering outside resources and perspectives, and growing our impact beyond the boundaries of our campus.

Presidential Commitment

Sr. Mary Persico, President of Marywood University, has committed her leadership and support to the Pacers to the Polls movement. She commits to aiding the committee with fully engaging students in all elections and voting related learning opportunities. This signed agreement makes a statement that Sr. 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.

Mission Statement

Marywood University's Mission guides our belief 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 acknowledgement of students' critical role as participants in society is further evidenced in our Core Values, including: *Service - a commitment to promoting social responsibility which fosters community engagement to meet real needs* and *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 at each New Student Orientation, Involvement Fairs, and on every Student Government Association (SGA) Election Ballot.

Landscape

Student Demographics

According to Marywood University's Fact Book, 27th Edition, the following data describes student demographics as of Fall 2021 by:

Race/Ethnicity (Total)

White	Black or African American	Hispanic	Asian	American Indian/ Alaska Native	Non-Resident Alien	Two or More Races	Unknown	*Total*
1,800	91	210	62	2	102	57	239	2,563
70.2%	3.6%	8.2%	2.4%	< 1%	4%	2.2%	9.3%	

Gender (Total)

Men	Women	Total
783	1,890	2,673
29.3%	70.7%	

Housing Status (Undergraduate Only)

On-Campus	Off-Campus	Total
612	1,067	1,679
36.5%	63.5%	

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 2022 elections according to the YESI: a further reminder and motivator of the critical importance of our efforts.

Landscape

Campus Climate

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

ALL IN Seals, Award Nominees, and Student Voting Honor Roll

- Marywood University received a Gold Seal from the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge for our Voting Rate (74.7%) in the 2020 Election
- The following members of the Marywood community were nominated for awards at the 2021 ALL IN Awards Ceremony:
    - Sr. Mary Persico, President of Marywood University (*Standout President)*
    - Michael Kalage, Director of Student Engagement & Civic Initiatives (*Standout Administrator)*
    - Austen Miller, Student Government Association President (*Standout Student)*
- Austen Miller, Marywood's Student Government Association President, was named to the ALL IN Student Voting Honor Roll in 2022.

Staffing & Personnel

- Director of Student Engagement title changed to Director of Student Engagement & Civic Initiatives to recognize and institutionalize democratic engagement work led by this department
- Advocacy & Civic Engagement Committee formed by the University President

Pennsylvania Mail Voting

In January 2021, a Pennsylvania State Court struck down the landmark law that expanded the availability of mail voting in the Commonwealth. An appeal is pending before the U.S. Supreme Court, so students and many other Pennsylvanians are uncertain about the current and future status and legality of mail ballots. Our strategies will address these uncertainties if such ambiguity remains in place during the November 2022 election.

Marywood University proudly participates in the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) and utilizes provided data and insights to inform our goal-setting process. Based on our previous reports:

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%	82%	- 32
White Student Voting Rate	77%	58%	+ 19
Black Student Voting Rate	67%	46%	+ 21
Hispanic Student Voting Rate	67%	50%	+ 17
Asian Student Voting Rate	49%	32%	+ 17
Men's Voting Rate	69%	54%	+ 15
Women's Voting Rate	76%	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 voting rate of **50%** in 2022
  - In 2018, Marywood University's voting rate was 39.1%

- Achieve voter registration rate **80%** in 2022
  - In 2018, Marywood University's student registration rate was 76.1%

- Achieve Hispanic & Black student voting rates of **45%** in 2022
  - In 2018, Marywood University's Hispanic student voting rate was 29.1% and the Black student voting rate was 32%

- Achieve Asian student voting rate of **40%** in 2022
  - In 2018, the Asian student voting rate was 21.5%

- Finish on the **Top 10** ALL IN To Vote Campus Pledge Leaderboard for 2022

- Achieve **Voter Friendly Campus** Designation in 2023

Long-Term

- Achieve voting rate of **80%** in 2024
  - In 2020, Marywood University's voting rate was 74.7%

- Prevent declines in voter registration rate in order to work towards a voter registration rate of **95%** by 2028

- Work to decrease racial and gender turnout gaps in order to **close all gaps** by 2032

- Include voter registration & election information in **all course syllabi** by 2024

- Provide **time off for faculty & staff** and **excused absences for students** to cast their ballots on each Election Day beginning in 2024

- Identify a representative from the **Lackawanna County Elections Office** to serve on our campus voting coalition by 2024

Strategies

Civic Holidays

Marywood University will participate in each of the Civic Holidays:

- **National Voter Registration Day** - Tuesday 9/20/22
  - In 2020, 21 students registered to vote for the first time on National Voter Registration Day, and dozens more checked or updated their registration
- **National Voter Education Week** - Monday 10/3 - Friday 10/7
  - Collaborate with faculty to share information in classes
- **Vote Early Day** - Friday 10/28
  - We experienced a 32% decline in students voting in person on Election Day from 2016 to 2020, so it is clear that the University must continue to support the increasing number of students choosing to vote early
- **Election Hero Day** - Monday 11/7
  - Recognize and celebrate poll workers and volunteers
  - Utilize resources from Power the Polls leading up to the Election to encourage members of our campus community to serve as poll workers

Constitution Day

Constitution Day programming is hosted out of the Social Sciences Department at Marywood University. Typically, the program has fallen into the hands of Assistant Professor of History and Honors Program Director, Adam Shprintzen, Ph.D. In the past, programming surrounding Constitution Day has been as simple as handing out a quiz in all History courses. Since then, the events have transformed into guest lectures, trivia nights, and voter registration drives. To remain eligible for Title IV funding, Higher Education Institutions must offer educational programs annually on September 17th, Constitution Day.

Social Media: @MarywoodSGA

- Encourage students to take the ALL IN to Vote Pledge and commit to voting in the 2022 election
- Utilize provided promotional materials for Civic Holidays

Funding

- Identify and secure financial support from the Students Learn Students Vote Coalition, Ask Every Student, Campus Takeover, and other sources which will allow us to bolster our programs and efforts

Closing the Gaps

- Encourage specialized & identity-based organizations to hold voter engagement programs to help widen our reach and include marginalized communities
  - These may include: Global Unity Club/Black Student Union, Sexuality & Gender Alliance, Environmental Club, Honors Program, Sororities, Student Athlete Advisory Committee, & History Society
- 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 an equal rate as women
  - Identify additional opportunities to reach this population
- Utilize Spanish, Arabic, and other language translations in printed materials provided by partners (National Voter Registration Day, State Department, etc.)

Voter Education & Access

- Offer classroom presentations as requested by faculty, with trained facilitators offering an overview of voter registration information, upcoming deadlines, absentee and mail ballots, polling places, laws and voter protection resources, etc.
- Include voter registration and election information on course syllabi and online learning systems (Brightspace by D2L)
- Promote and/or provide free ride options to voting places to students (Uber, Lyft, County of Lackawanna Transit System Buses)
- Provide free stamps to students utilizing mail ballots

Campus Integration

- Incentivize attendance at events by encouraging faculty to offer bonus points for attendance and 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 highly attended Involvement Fair
- Incorporate voter registration information on the Marywood University app (permanently) and the Marywood University homepage (at relevant times)
- Continue to provide voter registration information and links on SGA ballots, Homecoming Court ballots, etc.
- Offer voter registration assistance to every new student during New Student Orientation check-in, in collaboration with the Lackawanna County League of Women Voters

Strategies

Advocacy

- Students and student organizations will regularly be involved in legislative advocacy efforts, to increase their familiarity and understanding of the political process, and keep them engaged between elections
- ACE will research and advocate for local, state, and federal legislation as it impacts the needs and concerns of Marywood University and our students, and help to build and maintain positive relationships with legislators and policymakers
- Student involvement in this process will reinforce that their vote and their voice matter, even after elections, and experiencing positive outcomes and victories will motivate their continued investment in the democratic process

Austen Miller, Student Government Association President, makes a speech on the PA State Capitol Steps in support of funding for state grants

Members of the Student Government Association meet with State Representative Kyle Mullins

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 (Pacers to the Polls page)	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
Community Partners (Scranton Public Library, Scranton Area Community Foundation, etc.)	X	X
The Wood Word (Marywood University's newspaper)	X	X
Council of Clubs	X	
Marywood University's Outcomes Assessment Committee		X
Local media (FOX56, WNEP, Times Leader, etc.)		X

Past

Marywood University set the following goals for the 2020 Election:

Goal	Achieved?	SMARTIE?	Takeaways
Achieve voter registration rate **85%** in 2020	Yes	Yes	Indicates that we should continue and expand voter registration efforts
Aim to increase voter registration by **2%** every 2 years	Yes	No (not realistic)	Goal should be adjusted to reflect the decline in registration rates during midterm elections; 2% increase was achieved between 2018-2020 but is unlikely between 2020-2022
Achieve voter participation rate **80%** in 2020	Yes	No (not inclusive and equitable)	Indicates that we should continue and expand voter turnout efforts, however we must work to close racial/gender gaps

Future

Evaluation of our action plan and democratic engagement efforts will be conducted in an ongoing basis to ensure that ideas are not forgotten about, data does not become outdated, and momentum is not lost.

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. Additionally, the Advocacy & Civic Engagement Committee will review the action plan each semester to identify and recommend any significant shifts in focus or strategy. The plan will also be updated each time NSLVE data is received.

Additional factors that will influence evaluation and revision of our action plan include:

- o Registration data from our Marywood voter registration portal, provided by Civic Nation, which will hopefully be live for the 2022 Election
- o Usage data from the Marywood App which will analyze the number of clicks on in-app links including voter registration and mail ballot requests
- o Attendance at events including Civic Holidays, Voter Registration Drives, and Club-Sponsored Events
- o Assessment data from event post-surveys