



Menlo College

ALL-IN Campus Democracy Challenge



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Executive Summary

Development of the Plan



The Menlo College Civic Engagement Coalition includes students, faculty, and staff from across Menlo College. The coalition developed this action plan to increase nonpartisan civic learning, political engagement, and voter participation. The action plan incorporates best practices from the Students Learn Students Vote (SLSV) Coalition and the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge.

Also, under the guidance of national voter mobilization expert Dr. Melissa Michelson, we are working to explore the power of campus voting festivals to motivate turnout, using as a case study efforts conducted at Menlo College for the June 2022 primary and the 2022 midterm elections.

Previous Participation Rates

In the most recent midterm elections, in 2018, 62.9% of eligible Menlo College students registered and 30.8% of Menlo College students participated, a rate that was 8.3 percentage points below the national average of 39.1%. As with other institutions, turnout was higher in the two previous presidential elections: 32.8% in 2016 and 64.6% in 2020. There are several points of concern that the NSLVE report highlighted, which is the voting rate of Menlo College in comparison to “all institutions.” There must be significant efforts to register all eligible students to vote and promote their participation during election season. This will be made possible through our festival and in-class visits.

Menlo College only recently joined the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) and the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge (in 2020). Thus, the increase in turnout in 2020 may reflect not only the national trend toward higher turnout but also the increased campus commitment to voter participation. We are building on lessons learned in 2020 and the June 2022 primary in our plans to increase participation for the November 8, 2022 election.

2022 Action Plan Goal

For the 2022 Midterm Election, we utilized data from the last midterm election cycle as the baseline for setting our goals. The goals are:

- To increase our 2020 Voting Rate by 15.4 points, from 64.6% to 80.0%
- To increase our 2020 Registration Rate by 10.3 points, from 79.7% to 90.0%
- To increase our 2020 Rate of Registered Students who Voted by 8.9 points, from 81.1% to 90%

The overall goal of the coalition is to grow a permanent and persistent campus culture of civic engagement. This includes comprehensive, organized, actionable steps to encourage and enhance maximum voter participation in the 2022 midterm elections and in years to come.

Timeline

The action plan has already begun at Menlo College and will continue through the general election in November. For the June 2022 primary, our coalition hosted a campus-wide effort to register voters, including tabling, classroom visits, and a voting festival with a taco truck. Overall, 20% of Menlo students pledged to register to vote and 52% of students pledged to vote in the primary election.

For the Midterm Elections, the coalition has already hosted a campus celebration of National Voter Registration Day and Constitution Day, held on September 22, 2022. The Coalition will meet bi-weekly starting October 4, 2022.

On October 18, 2022, the coalition will host an on-campus forum for candidates for the local city council, to be co-sponsored by the local League of Women Voters, and open to (and publicized to) members of the local community.

On November 8, 2022, we will host a Midterm Election campus festival. Additional components of our action plan for the fall election include tabling, classroom visits, and posting on social media.

Leadership



The coalition is led by Dr. Melissa R. Michelson, Dean of Arts & Sciences and Professor of Political Science, and Diana Guardado, '23 (Political Science and Public Policy), student assistant to the dean. Dr. Michelson serves as advisor to the coalition; day-to-day leadership of the student-centered team is conducted by Ms. Guardado.

Coalition Members

Melissa Michelson Dean of Arts & Sciences & Professor of Political Science

Diana Guardado Chairperson

Angielyn Dela Cruz Student Leader

Irismar Hernandez Martinez Student Leader from the Admissions Office

Joshua Villalva Student Leader

Motsumi Banjoko Student Leader from the IT Department

Tricia Soto Information Services Librarian at Menlo College Bowman Library

Commitment and Landscape



At Menlo College, our mission is to ignite potential and educate students to make meaningful contributions to the innovation economy. One of our mission's pillars involves celebrating our differences and honoring a rich spectrum of identity, including ethnicity, race, sexual orientation, personal identity, and religious and political views.

Menlo is a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI), and an Asian American, Native American, Pacific Islander Serving Institution (AANAPISI). About one-third of our students are first-generation students.

Our Civic Engagement Coalition is committed to organizing programs, constructing curriculum, and hosting events with diversity, equity, and inclusion at the forefront, including when making decisions about the coalition's future plans.

At Menlo College, we aim to increase participation among low-propensity voters through voting festivals, generating a spirit of community and celebration that has been lost in the modern era of secret ballots and vote-by-mail elections. Our coalition has identified long-term goals directed at creating a sustainable system of democratic engagement and education. Our actions and goals are rooted in impactful values:

- As a nonpartisan group, advocating for the right of all students to easily cast a vote in all elections
- Promoting democratic engagement and creating open dialogue among the student body as well as an active conversation with our elected representatives
- Sustaining Menlo College’s work in promoting and acting upon ideas centered around diversity, equity, and inclusion

Goals

Menlo College Civic Engagement Coalition will focus on the following goals for 2022:

- Earn a Diamond seal for the ALL IN Democracy Challenge for achieving a student voting rate between 89.5% to 100%
- Meet a 100% voter registration status by the November 2022 election
- Host at least one candidate forum to foster relationships with community members outside of Menlo College
- Visit at least 10% of classes to share the *Ask Every Student* “Student 101 Voting” presentation



Strategy

A variety of voter registration, voter education, and get-out-the-vote strategies will continue to be utilized at Menlo College during 2022 and beyond to ensure progress toward our goals

Partnering with Civic Engagement Programs

Our coalition will use existing content from the following organizations to promote elections, opportunities, and action steps:

- [Campus Vote Project](#)
- [Students Learn Students Vote \(SLSV\) Coalition](#)
- [ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge](#)

Voter Registration Celebration

In honor of National Voter Registration Day and Vote Early Day, we will offer voter registration and educational resources at already scheduled tabling sessions including the Student Government Elections and the distributions of keys to the new hall building.

Candidate Forum

All students and community members outside of Menlo College are welcome to join our forum with candidates running for city council in Atherton. The public will have the opportunity to inquire about candidates' political agendas, initiatives, and visions for the city.

Student 101 Voting Presentations

Coalition leaders will present *Ask Every Student's* "Student 101 Voting" presentation to a minimum of 10% of classes. These presentations will emphasize the importance of civic action to identify and address issues of public concern. We will galvanize students to work in a collaborative spirit to make a change or difference in the community. At the end of each presentation, we will ask eligible students to sign the ALL IN pledge, promising to vote on Election Day.



General Election Festival

On November 8, 2022, we will have free food, raffle prizes, live performances, and activities for students to celebrate the power of voting and democracy. All students and faculty are welcome to participate as we unite to become active participants in our democracy.

Evaluation and Reporting



This plan and NSLVE reports will be provided on the Student Vote Research Network site. The Coalition will revisit the plan each year and provide updates on progress. Accomplishments will be shared with the Alumni Office for press releases.