



Metro State University 2022 Democratic Engagement Action Plan

Developed by: Jodi Bantley

Executive Summary:

This nonpartisan democratic engagement action plan was developed by Metro State University in Minnesota for the 2022 election. The purpose of this action plan is to increase nonpartisan democratic engagement and student voter registration, education, and turnout in the 2022 midterm election. The goals for Metro State University for the 2022 election are:

- provide regular, timely information to students and the entire university community about voting processes and deadlines in Minnesota
- promote voter engagement and register at least 50 new voters through direct outreach, class visits, and the Rock The Vote on-line voter registration tool
- offer tools and information to enable at least 250 students to cast a more informed vote.

Leadership:

Our leadership team includes the following:

Jodi Bantley - Associate Director, Civic and Community Partnerships
Katie Peacock, Associate Director, Academic Community Engagement
Felipe Olaya-Arias–Metro State Votes 2022 Student Coordinator
Philip Fuehrer–Interim Director, Student Life and Leadership Development
Raul Ruiz–Library Services Manager
Pamela Mercier–Voter Engagement Co-Chair, League of Women Voters-St. Paul
Janice Hawkins–President, Metro State University Student Association (MSUSA)
Thomas “TJ” Campbell–MSUSA Senator
Sam Samuelson–Advocacy and Political Leadership (APL) Service Club
Matthew Filner–Professor of Political Science, Social Science Department
Megan Brown–Associate Professor, Masters of Advocacy and Political Leadership (MAPL)
Susan Hilal–Professor, Criminal Justice Studies
Rudy Lee–Advisor, TRiO Support Programs
Ginny Arthur–President
Laura Lindahl–Marketing Director (web content and employee newsletter)
Steve Reed–Chief Information Officer (re: Rock The Vote technology)
Jo Woodward–Gateway Student Services Director (for all-student messages)

Our campus works with the following nonprofit partners: American Democracy Project, Ask Every Student, Campus Compact, LEAD-MN, ALL IN Challenge, Students Learn Students Vote Coalition, MinnState Civic Engagement Practitioners Network, League of Women Voters-Saint Paul, MN Secretary of State’s Office.

Commitment:

Metro State University's vision includes "an unwavering commitment to civic engagement." In addition, the President's work plan identifies community engagement as one of 7 strategic university priorities. This commitment is woven into the culture of the institution at all levels: Presidential communiques, annual small grants and awards to faculty for community-engaged scholarship (often involving students), election- and civic-related curricular projects in multiple courses including course-based academic internships (Spring "Capitol Pathways" program, summer campaigns, etc.), student advocacy, civic learning events sponsored by student clubs, academic departments and student affairs personnel, and a biannual voter registration campaign called Metro State Votes (including course-based projects, tabling at prime campus locations, class visits, events, campus-wide communication, high-visibility skyway banners and social media.) The university's Institute for Community Engagement and Scholarship, composed of five seasoned staff members, enables significant cross-campus collaboration on these activities. Metro State University has been a signatory to the Higher Education Presidents' Commitment to Full Student Voter Participation since 2020.

Landscape:

Metro State University is a public 4-year institution—a commuter campus with 4 primary locations in Minnesota's Twin Cities metropolitan region. We have approximately 10,500 students (7500 FY equivalents), the vast majority of whom live and work in the metro area. About $\frac{2}{3}$ are Pell grant-eligible and a similar number, first-generation college students; we estimate that more than $\frac{1}{2}$ are parents. Our students range in age from 17 to 72. Among them, 52% are Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Asian-heritage and mixed-heritage. Our institution is designated as a Minority Serving Institution, AANAPISI.

Metropolitan State University joined the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge in 2016 and has authorized NSLVE, which reports the following.

Our institution had a 2020 campus voting rate of 71.3%.
Our institution had a 2020 voter registration rate of 83.4%.

Our institution had a 2018 voter turnout rate of 58.6%.
Our institution had a 2018 voter registration rate of 80.6%.

Our institution has been recognized in the past by ALL IN for these awards: 2018 Highest Undergraduate Voting Rate at a Medium Public 4-year, Highest Undergraduate Voting Rate at a Medium Public 4-year

Our institution has been recognized by ALL IN with the following seals: 2016 Silver, 2018 Platinum, 2020 Gold

Goals:

Our campus democratic engagement goals are:

- Increase student voter turnout rate to 62% in 2022 and 75% in 2024.
- Increase student voter registration rate to 84% in 2022 and 86% in 2024.

Strategy:

Metro State University will implement these strategies to increase nonpartisan democratic engagement and student voter participation.

- Provide monthly, direct communication to all students through Gateway Students Services about voter registration and voting:
 - late August: how to register
 - late September/*National Voter Reg Day*: early voting by mail or in-person
 - late October/*Vote Early Day*: early voting in-person and same-day registration
- Implement Rock The Vote's online voter registration tool as soon as it becomes available
 - secure agreement with IT and Marketing departments to feature it prominently on the university website and the landing page of the D2L course platform.
 - update content as early voting opens and pre-registration/mail-in ballot deadlines pass
- Host voter registration/info tables at least twice weekly in prominent campus locations
 - Staff two tables at Fall Fest in early September—one for voter registration (MSV campaign staff); one to engage in issue discussions and priorities (APL students)
 - Support and help promote MSUSA's *National Voter Registration Day* "pizza and politics" registration event at the Student Center (in partnership with LEAD-MN)
 - Host ongoing tables at the main campus library (in collaboration with LWV-SP and Library Services) for broadest outreach
 - Host tables in College of Sciences to target registration toward younger students
- Visit at least 10 class with voter education and registration info
 - focus on classes that tend to attract our youngest students (Sciences, METR 101, etc.)
- Engage 3-5 faculty in developing course-based voter education projects:
 - provide training for students in conducting deliberative dialogues and making class presentations on voting
 - engage those students in other Metro State Votes 2022 activities and events.
- Promote and direct students, especially those doing course-based projects, toward participation in tabling, class visits and these additional MSV22 activities and events:
 - letter writing campaign organized through TRiO Student Support Services
 - *National Voter Education Week* forum sponsored by APL with local, state and federal elected officials or their staff for students to more fully understand what role various offices play and how they can learn more about issues/candidates.
 - Social media guides to reinforce GOTV messaging as much as possible on campus and in students' own networks.
- Create a buzz and visibility using:
 - skyway banners
 - signage with QR codes to the Secretary of State's Elections page at strategic locations: Library, College of Science, Parking Ramp, public bulletin boards
 - social media posts
 - employee newsletter... asking faculty and staff to encourage students to vote

Evaluation:

We will evaluate our action plan in the following ways:

- Table leaders will tally the number of new paper voter registration forms completed or those they directly observe being completed electronically via the Secretary of State's website.

- Reports from Rock the Vote's OVR tool will count the number of voter registrations documented there.
- Table volunteers will tally the number of voter education conversations held.
- Class rosters and reports from faculty will tell us how many students were reached with voter education through class visit as well as numbers of students engaged in course-based projects (who, in turn, will estimate the numbers of students they reached.)
- Faculty will share qualitative feedback of learning based on student feedback and course evaluations.
- Leaders of events and activities will report attendance/participation and share qualitative reflections. These include: NVRD Pizza Party, NVEW webinar, Fall Fest, TRiO's letter-writing campaign and two post-election events—and Election Night Party and "Election Decompression."

Jodi Bantley and Katie Peacock will gather the data and convene core members of the planning group to analyze that data and share their own qualitative feedback on what worked best, what they've learned and how programming could be improved in the future. And then we'll celebrate our collective effort!

Reporting:

Our campus action plan will be posted on our campus page on ALL IN's website <https://allinchallenge.org/campuses/metropolitan-state-university/>.

Our institution has given ALL IN permission to publish our NSLVE reports which are posted on our campus page on ALL IN's website.

Our NSLVE reports will be shared with the President's office and the director of the Institute for Community Engagement and Scholarship. Institute staff review the report with its Faculty Advisory Group (and those representatives, in turn, with colleagues in their college) and to all Metro State employees through the weekly *Metro Moment* employee newsletter and/or the department's *Bulletin: Resources for Community Engagement*, both of which contains links to online posts of the full report.