

# **Miami University Regionals Democratic Engagement Action Plan: Academic Years 2022-2023 and 2023-2024**

## **I. Executive Summary**

This action plan was developed by Collette Loskoch Thompson, Regional Director, Department of Civic Education to communicate our strategy for increasing both the registration and turnout rates of voters at Miami University Regionals. The planned activities outlined here will be carried out over Academic Years 2022-2023 and 2023-2024, on and around our campuses in Hamilton, Middletown, and West Chester, Ohio.

The following groups will be leading this work at Miami University Regionals in order to accomplish our goals and further institutionalize our commitment to civic learning, democratic engagement, and youth participation in elections:

- Undergraduate Students
- Miami employees including faculty and student affairs staff
- Civic/Political/Community Engagement Center
- Government Affairs Staff

The mission of the Department of Civic Education is:

- Preparing students to be transformative leaders for the common good by facilitating impactful academic and cocurricular community engagement programs focused on civic learning and democratic engagement.

This plan is being established to not only secure Voter Friendly Campus and ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge Designations but also serve as a game plan for enhancing and growing the civic learning and democratic engagement work at Miami University Regionals.

## **II. Leadership**

Collette Loskoch Thompson, Regional Director for Center for Civic Engagement will be overseeing our work to increase civic learning and democratic engagement on campus. They will be supported in this work by:

- Jacob Gainey, Civic Newman Fellow; Jacob is the first student to represent Miami Regionals in this role. He is also the founder of Impact, a student organization focused on community service and leadership.
- Rice, coordinator, Regional Office of Student Affairs; Derek works directly with students including student organizations.
- Dr. Bennyce Hamilton, Director, Office for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; Bennyce is an amazing community builder and does so with DEI at the core of her work.
- Dr. John Forren, Director, Mennard Center for Democracy; John creates wonderful civic learning opportunities. He is a key in the education part of our plan.
- Kenzie Bryant, Graphic Design Specialist and Regionals alum; As a former student and creative mind, she can help us connect with our community in new and creative ways.
- Butler County Board of Elections; We have partnered with them in the past and are planning to begin our work together again in this upcoming year.
- Regionals Student Government; While the leadership of this organization is rebuilding from COVID, this group is key for student involvement.
- Laura Hicks, Engagement Specialist; Laura can help us know how best to connect and support our e-campus students.
- Randi Thomas; Vice President of ASPIRE; Randi is Miami's connector to all things government. Although Randi is housed on the Oxford campus, he will help us connect to the One Miami efforts for civic learning and democratic engagement.

This coalition is diverse and inclusive of:

- Representation from different parts of campus, including student leadership, and from different perspectives and areas of expertise;
- Trusted leaders and organizations who support communities that are historically underrepresented in democracy;
- Leaders who can help with outreach and power building by bringing more people across campus in to our work, includes key stakeholders from the community who have a special interest in the democratic engagement of Miami students.

Monthly meetings will be held for the leadership team. Quarterly meetings will be held for other campus stakeholders. Committee meetings occur throughout the year as necessary. The time for all of these meetings will be determined at the start of the new academic year.

In the event that our leadership leaves campus or is no longer involved in this work, we have a succession plan in place. The CLDE efforts at Miami University Regionals are led by the Department of Civic Education's Center for Social Impact. Democratic engagement and civic

learning are one of the three core components of this department as well as community engaged learning and regional stewardship. The Regional Director of this department provides leadership to the coalition and has a primary responsibility to oversee voter engagement programming.

Miami University Regionals partners with the following organizations from the Students Learn Students Vote Coalition to support our efforts on campus:

- Ohio Campus Compact
- AAC&U
- League of Women Voters
- Campus Vote Project
- Vote Early Day

### III. Commitment

Our institution and our campus leadership demonstrate commitment to improving civic learning and democratic engagement. The mission at Miami University Regionals is to provide open access for diverse learners to high-quality applied education grounded in the liberal arts. Our vision is Empowering Minds, Strengthening Communities. Miami Regionals was created for the community by the community. With this in mind, Regionals' purpose of preparing civic-minded citizens to participate in our democratic society is emphasized by us being an open access institution which welcomes diverse learners and our priority of strengthening communities in which our campus stakeholders live.

We also see this same commitment reflected in our institution's values. The values for Miami University at large is “a scholarly community whose members believe that a liberal education is grounded in qualities of character as well as of intellect. We respect the dignity of other persons, the rights and property of others, and the right of others to hold and express disparate beliefs. We believe in honesty, integrity, and the importance of moral conduct. We defend the freedom of inquiry that is the heart of learning and combine that freedom with the exercise of judgment and the acceptance of personal responsibility.

While grounded in the values of our institution, Miami University Regionals emphasizes the following core values as well:

**Access:** Every student who wants to work hard for a Miami University degree will be able to pursue one through our open access admission policy, affordable pricing, flexible scheduling, and varied methods of course delivery.

**Community:** We are committed to the local communities out of which the Regionals were founded through curricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular programming that demonstrates sustained engagement with the people and organizations working in and near those communities.

**Diversity:** We value the qualities that each individual brings to Miami Regionals, and we embrace the rich educational opportunities that arise when people of diverse backgrounds, experiences, and identities come together to learn.

**Student Success:** We are committed to ensuring success through quality advising, academic support and learning assistance, co-curricular and extracurricular programming, the recruitment and retention of skilled staff members who provide high-quality services for students, and a robust focus on career development, placement, and post-graduation support through alumni engagement services.

**Teaching Excellence:** We are committed to recruiting and retaining a talented faculty. Faculty who choose a career at Miami Regionals are deeply committed to creating innovative classroom and online experiences, complemented by relevant and challenging research initiatives and meaningful service to campus and community.”

On campus, we've seen:

- Voter education resources
- Campus leaders promoting voting
- Voter registration tables
- Signage promoting Election Day

On campus, we've experienced:

- Political speakers
- Town halls
- Registering to vote
- Civic Holiday events (such as National Voter Registration Day, National Voter Education Week, and Vote Early Day)
- Deliberative dialogues

As we are recovering from the impacts of COVID, the emphasis on civic learning and democratic engagement needs to not only be increased but also reimagined with new leadership.

## IV. Landscape

The following tables provide a brief overview of the landscape of our campus. This information is based on data collected from Fall 2021 when our total student enrollment was 3,781.

### Enrollment Data:

Undergraduate	Graduate	Full Time	Part Time
100.00%	0.00%	68.16%	31.84%

In-State	Out-of-State	International Students	On-Campus Residents	Commuter
90.10%	9.90%	8.33%	0.00%	100.00%

### Gender Demographics:

Men	Women	Non-Binary	Transgender
47.10%	52.90%		

### Age:

18-21	22-24	25-29	30-39	40-49	50+
53.19%	18.20%	7.56%	5.66%	2.43%	1.27%

### Racial Demographics:

Asian	American Indian / Alaska Native	Black	Hispanic	Native Hawaiian / Pacific Islander	White	2 or More Races

2.17%	0.24%	6.85%	3.57%	0.00%	71.33%	4.21%
-------	-------	-------	-------	-------	--------	-------

Our institution has also utilized the following data gathering tools:

- Ask Every Student First Step Form
- National Survey of Student Engagement

With new leadership, Miami University Regionals has become a more data driven campus. With that said, we will be using data in a more strategic way to enhance our civic learning and democratic engagement programming. Being part of national efforts, such as Ask Every Student, will help us with advancing our work. In the past, while National Survey of Student Engagement data was collected, it was underutilized for our voter engagement efforts. As we begin to build more robust programs, we will be more intentional about using this as a resource to better understand our students.

## V. Goals

Before setting our civic learning and democratic engagement goals on campus, we took the following information into consideration.

We know our campus faces following challenges internally when it comes to get out the vote efforts and registering voters:

- Our institution's mission statement, values, and strategic plan do not specifically mention civic learning and democratic engagement.
- While we have someone whose job responsibility is to foster civic learning and democratic engagement on our campus, we lack institutional involvement and commitment.
- We don't have sustainable or consistent funding.

With that said, we know our campus has the following strengths when we approach our voter engagement work:

- We have processes in place for registering large percentages of our students through new and transfer student orientation.
- We have ways in which we communicate voting information to our students through social media and departmental efforts.
- Voter engagement efforts on campus are nonpartisan.
- We are able to engage student leaders for the leadership of our initiative.
- We have a working relationship with our local election office.

- We have working relationships with community partners who are invested in civic learning and democratic engagement.

This next year will be one focused on rebuilding and reenergizing. With this in mind, we have set the three goals that we would like to achieve over the next academic year:

1. Reestablish our campus-wide voting coalition.
2. Actively participate in National Voter Registration Day with face-to-face events.
3. Find faculty to serve as leaders in establishing a Faculty Champion program.

We have also set three goals that we would like to achieve over the next five years:

1. Create more access and opportunities for students at Regionals by working with Oxford leadership to establish a One Miami Voter Engagement program.
2. A minimum of 50% of CLDE programming at Regionals be student led.
3. Work with institutional leadership and Tufts to either receive an NSLVE report specifically for Regionals or obtain data so we can have accurate information on the voting behaviors of students at Regionals, which is a much different and smaller demographic than Oxford.

## **VI. Strategy**

Below, we have outlined a strategy describing how we will bring this vision to life in the coming months and years.

### **Short Term/ Already Doing Tactics**

(Note: Due to covid, some of these activities have been on hold in recent years.)

#### **Registration**

- In collaboration with the Regional Office of Student Activities (ROSA), voter registration is incorporated in new/ transfer student orientation.
- Active participation in Civic Holidays as well as Constitution Day
- Voter Registration tabling across campus on a regular basis.
- Work with campus staff to incorporate voter registration into the online platforms; key partners in this are ROSA and TurboVote in The Hub and our Regionals Libraries who have the Civic Corners.
- Office of DEI regularly hosts opportunities for dialogues that address import social issues. These also serve as community building activities that bring together on- and off- campus stakeholders.

- Days of Service are offered several times an academic year to enhance active citizenship of our students.

### **Education**

- The Center for Democracy offers a variety of programs to enhance civic learning including candidate town halls.
- In partnership with Butler County Board of Elections, recruit student to be poll workers.
- Online voter information provided by Center for Social Impact and Regional Libraries.
- Voter registration is incorporated as a module in our first year student seminar.
- Active participation in National Voter Education Week including community service opportunity.

### **Turnout**

- Promote upcoming election with print and digital flyers.
- Hold a campus-wide Pledge-to-Vote campaign.
- Hold "I care about..." campaign in conjunction with Constitution Day.
- Promote Vote Early Day.

### **Resources**

- Department of Civic Education includes the Center for Social Impact which provides staffing support and oversight to civic learning and democratic engagement. Convenes a campus-wide voting coalition and connects community resources/ organizations to the campus.
- Democracy Wall to encourage critical thinking and dialogue
- Utilization of TurboVote on The Hub
- Refer Regional Students to Miami's President for Campus Compact Newman Civic Fellow program
- Reestablish active participation in VFC and other national programs focused on enhancing student voter engagement.

### **Short Term/ Plan To Do Tactics**

#### **Registration**

- Work with our Office of the Vice President for Regionals to establish a marketing plan for regularly communicating important voting information.
- Develop plan to incorporate voter registration into popular events on campus including both co-curricular and academic gatherings.
- Coordinate voter registration training and drives with student organizations to increase peer to peer interaction.
- Expand our work with campus staff to incorporate voter registration into more online platforms and collaborate on incorporating voter registration into more programs and events.

## **Education**

- Host debate watch parties for upcoming Governor's race.
- Train students in deliberative dialogue facilitation.
- Establish a strategy for a faculty champions program to enhance CL and DE on campus.

## **Turnout**

- Establish Vote-by-mail programming including a vote-by-mail party.
- Enhance campus-wide Pledge-to-Vote campaign.
- Enhance our Vote Early Day efforts beyond just marketing to include face-to-face activities.
- Hold a National Poll Worker Recruitment Day with Butler County Board of Elections.

## **Resources**

- Determine if we should upgrade our Turbo Vote offering on The Hub.
- Become a SLSV Coalition member.
- Participate in Ask Every Student Initiative
- Utilize the Strengthening American Democracy guide to enhance our coalition and voter engagement efforts.

## **Short Term/ Hope To Do Tactics**

### **Registration**

- Coordinate with Regionals Student Government on enhancing voter registration efforts; look for opportunities to incorporate voter registration into the process for student government elections.
- Begin conversations on how to include our international students in voting related activities.

### **Education**

- Work with Miami University's ASPIRE, our governmental relations office that is committed to advancing strategy, partnerships, institutional relations, and economy, to establish a program that connects students at Regionals to local governments in Butler County.

### **Turnout**

- Collaborate with Veterans Office to coordinate "I Vote in Honor of a Veteran" program.
- With Butler County Board of Elections, explore the establishment of an early voting location on campus.

### **Resources**

- Begin conversations with local and statewide nonprofits to enlist more SLSV members.

## Long Term/ Want To Do Tactics

### Registration

- Develop an engagement plan for involving international students in voting related activities. This will include but not limited to:
  - Providing voter registration forms in different languages.
  - Through involvement with Ask Every Student, provide registration resources for international students.
  - Promote and host an info session for students who are not eligible to vote to get involved.

### Education

- Work more closely with Miami University's ASPIRE to better connect our students to local and statewide opportunities for government engagement.

## Long Term/ Hope To Do Tactics

### Education

- Through student leadership, create and distribute a nonpartisan student voter guide; The new student newspaper could be a key collaborator for this
- Work with student newspaper to provide consistent information about voting

### Turnout

- Establish content for syllabi related to voter resources as well as election day. Provide resources to faculty so they can encourage students to vote.

## **VII. National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE)**

*Note: Miami Regionals is part of the Miami University system. While the data for our students from Regionals is included in the full Miami report, it is not a useful tool for Regionals because the larger population of Miami Oxford students skews the data.*

Our campus has access to our National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) data for 2020. In 2020 our registration rate was 86.3. In comparison to the data from four years prior in our NSLVE report, this rate increased.

In 2020, our voting rate was 70.5 and our voting rate among registered students was 81.7. During this year, our voting rate was higher than the national average.

In our NSLVE report, we had racial data for the following groups:

- Asian
- American Indian / Alaska Native
- Black

- Hispanic
- White
- 2 or More Races

For the racial groups that have recent voter turnout data, we saw the following groups increase in voter turnout compared to four years ago.

- Asian
- American Indian / Alaska Native
- Black
- Hispanic
- White
- 2 or More Races

The biggest challenge of the NSLVE report for our efforts at Regionals is that the report focuses on the entire Miami University system. Because our student enrollment is so low in comparison to that of our main campus, we unfortunately do not get an accurate understanding of the voting habits of students at Regionals.

## **VIII. Reporting & Evaluation**

We plan to share this Action Plan internally when it is complete by taking the following actions:

- Email to members of our campus coalition
- Email to campus administration
- Email to the President

We plan to share this Action Plan externally when it is complete by taking the following actions:

- Post on the campus website
- Release in a public statement

We will collect feedback on this plan by:

- Regrouping with campus coalition to debrief and reflect
- We will have a series of conversations with students and other campus stakeholders to collect feedback on the plan.

We plan to evaluate our success by:

- Seeking out feedback throughout the action planning process from people outside of our action planning team
- Revisiting our goals, identifying goals achieved and not achieved, and adjusting our short and long-term goals accordingly

