



## Missouri State University 2022 Democratic Engagement Action Plan

Developed by: Stacey Trewatha-Bach & Suzanne Walker-Pacheco

### **Executive Summary:**

This nonpartisan democratic engagement action plan was developed by Missouri State University in Missouri 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 Missouri State University for the 2022 election are:

Our goals are to increase voter participation and offer resources for students to practice well-informed voting. Our specific objectives are to: facilitate students' understanding of the ways voting relates to their lives, familiarize them with the entire voting process, and increase their awareness of unbiased sources of political information.

Our approach is multi-faceted and broad in scope, depending greatly upon innovative ideas by the student Leadership Team about energizing and engaging their peers.

### **Leadership:**

Our leadership team includes the following:

Campus Coordinator:  
Stacey Trewatha-Bach  
Coordinator, Office of Public Affairs Support

Faculty Coordinator:  
Suzanne Walker-Pacheco, PhD  
Department of Sociology and Anthropology

Graduate Assistant:  
Zion Riffe-Stevens, Department of Political Science

Advisory Board:  
Emily Fessler, MPH  
Elizabeth Wertz

Support from various units across campus including the President's Office.

Our campus works with these following nonprofit partners: American Democracy Project, Greene County Clerks Office and the Southwest Missouri League of Women Voters.

**Commitment:**

Our approach is multi-faceted and broad, with the three main components being: Education, Outreach and Voter Support. Missouri State University has been a signatory to the Higher Education Presidents' Commitment to Full Student Voter Participation since 2020 and will continue that commitment.

The campus team and student group, Paws to the Polls, relates directly to the university's unique mission in public affairs and directly envelops the pillars of community engagement and ethical leadership. Efforts benefit Missouri State University at every level, from the individual students up to the entire university. Voter education efforts engage the MSU community civically through increased voter literacy. Barriers to student voting include feeling intimidated by the voter registration and actual voting process, lack of information about issues and candidates, and feelings of disengagement with the community. The actions of Paws to the Polls, together with those of our campus and community partners, help ensure that MSU students are provided with voter information and sources of unbiased information, both of which lead to exercising their right to vote. Engagement on campus and in community enhances the student experience and greatly increases student retention on campus. The increased voter literacy and participation will engage the university community with the larger political, social, and ethical culture of the United States.

**Landscape:**

Missouri State University is a public 4-year institution and joined the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge in 2016.

Our campus demographic and voting data:

Missouri State University has 23,505 students.

Missouri State University has authorized NSLVE.

Our institution had a 2020 campus voting rate of 62.6%.  
Our institution had a 2020 voter registration rate of 85.2%.

Our institution had a 2018 voter turnout rate of 35.9%.  
Our institution had a 2018 voter registration rate of 81.7%.

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

**Goals:**

Our campus democratic engagement goals are:

Increase student voter turnout rate to 45% in 2022 mid-terms and to 47% in 2024.

Increase student voter registration rates to 86% in 2022 mid-terms and to 90% in 2024.

Distribute 6,000 voter information booklets before end of 2022.

### **Strategy:**

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

- Develop a Voter Information Booklet that is embedded in all actions and goal-reaching activities. Updated each semester, the booklet includes all necessary information on registering to vote and voting, as well as nonpartisan sources of political information.
- Educational Videos: Producing two voting-related videos, accessible on our website and used as part of the Voter Education Curriculum for Freshman Foundation classes.
- Classroom Presentations: Of various lengths, in-person or via Zoom, our team of staff, faculty and students are facilitating student voter registration, conveying voting-related information, and raising awareness of campus voting resources. Also conducted voter simulation exercises to demonstrate the importance of each vote in the representation of citizens.
- Workshops and Visits to Student Groups
- Tabling, Voter Registration Drives and other activities: Tabling: distribution of our voter information booklet, support for absentee voting, and all voter-related information. Registration events: football team, residence halls and other large groups.  
  
Special events: annual Trivia Night, social media contest on election days, Voter Awareness Week (first annual in October of 2022), to include two days of tabling, a Voting Fair, and a discussion panel with elected representatives of both major parties.
- Campus-wide events: provided Interaction with Legislator events through forums, debates and other activities.

### **Evaluation:**

Evaluation efforts will include:

- 2022 NSLVE voting data
- Freshman Foundation Class pre- and post-test results. Will demonstrate a marked increase in student knowledge of voting-related topics and their perception of the importance of voting.

### **Reporting:**

- NSLVE reports will be posted on university's website pages.
- NSLVE data shared within campus presentations, update reports and as requested.
- Journal articles are being written to report out baseline and evaluation efforts within the university's freshman Foundation classes from 2021-2022.

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