

Montclair State University Democratic Engagement Action Plan: 2022-2023 Academic Year

This plan was created using the Votes & Ballots Action Planning Form. We highly recommend editing and expanding upon this draft before submitting for review.

Throughout this document, we mention the Strengthening American Democracy Guide as a resource for your review. We encourage you to turn to that resource for guidance and support as you complete your action plan!

I. Executive Summary

This action plan was developed by Mariel Pagan, Assistant Dean for Student Engagement to communicate our strategy for increasing both the registration and turnout rates of voters at Montclair State University. The planned activities outlined here will be carried out over 2022-2023 Academic Year, on and around our campus in 1 Normal Ave, New Jersey.

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

- Student Affairs Staff

How can you improve this section? Visit the Strengthening American Democracy Guide and review the Guiding Questions to ensure your Executive Summary includes everything that you feel should be addressed.

II. Leadership

Dr. Mariel Pagán, Assistant Dean for Student Engagement will be overseeing our work to increase civic learning and democratic engagement on campus. They will be supported in this work by:

- Tia-Lee Dawson, Co-Chair of the Montclair State Votes Coalition, Graduate Coordinator for the Office of Civic & Voter Engagement
- Dr. Birgid Harrison, Chair of the Political Science Department
- Bryan Murdock, Director of Community Engagement
- Christopher Cottle, Department Advisor, Family Science and Human Development
- Maria Rodriguez Gregg, Director of Government Relations and Community Affairs

- Arnold Korotkin, Adjunct Faculty, Sociology
- Tara Mellor, Associate Director of Residence Life
- Lori Petrozzello, Program Associate, Sprague Library
- Pascale Lafountain, University Senate and Associate Professor, World Languages and Cultures
- Sam MacPherson, Political Science Club
- Michael Cerbo, Pre-Law Society
- Richard Steirner-Otoo, SGA Executive President

This coalition is diverse and inclusive of:

- Representation from different parts of campus, including student leadership, Representation 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

Our group plans to meet Monthly at Via Zoom

We are also partnering with the following organizations from the Students Learn Students Vote Coalition to support our efforts on campus:

- ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge
- Andrew Goodman Foundation
- Campus Vote Project
- League of Women Voters
- NASPA

How can you improve this section? Visit the *Strengthening American Democracy Guide* and review the *Guiding Questions* to ensure your *Leadership Section* includes everything that you feel should be addressed.

III. Commitment

Our institution and our campus leadership demonstrates commitment to improving civic learning and democratic engagement. As stated in our mission statement, All University programs will develop in students the ability to discover, create, evaluate, apply, and share knowledge in a climate characterized by tolerance and openness in the exploration of ideas. Curricular and co-curricular programs will cultivate the ability to think critically, to act ethically, and to become informed citizen-participants prepared to assume leadership roles in a democracy. Recognizing the increasing connectedness of the world, the University will ensure that all students develop an understanding of global issues and of their responsibilities as citizens of the world. We also see this same commitment reflected in our institution's values. They state, "Montclair State Values Success:Continually promoting academic excellence and post-graduate achievement Access:Proactively employing strategies to level the playing field for students seeking further education Innovation:Embracing innovation, experimentation, and creativity for excellence and efficiency Social Justice:Understanding and working to dismantle barriers to the opportunities and privileges appropriate to all residents of New Jersey Sustainability:Building practices and programs for long-term survival and flourishing of the UniversityCommunity:Connecting to community through strategic partnerships, collaborations, and services"

In addition, our campus has mentioned civic learning and democratic engagement in their strategic plan, stating Objective 1.5 Expand programs and services that improve students' opportunities for life-long success and engaged citizenship, and increase the University's commitment to their continued relationship as alumni

On campus, we've seen:

- Voter education resources
- Political clubs or student organizations
- Campus leaders promoting voting
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- Voter registration tables
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- Signage promoting Election Day
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On campus, we've experienced:

- Voting in student body elections
- Political speakers
- Walks / rides to polls
- Town halls
- Registering to vote
- Civic Holiday events (such as National Voter Registration Day, National Voter Education Week, and Vote Early Day)
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The emphasis on civic learning and democratic engagement could be increased.

How can you improve this section? Visit the *Strengthening American Democracy Guide* and review the *Guiding Questions* to ensure your *Commitment Section* includes everything that you feel should be addressed.

IV. Landscape

The following tables provide a brief overview of the landscape of our campus. This information is based on data collected from when our total student enrollment was 21,005.

Enrollment Data:

Undergraduate	Graduate	Full Time	Part Time
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77.00%	33.00%	11.00%	89.00%
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In-State	Out-of-State	International Students	On-Campus Residents	Commuter
94.00%	6.00%			

Gender Demographics:

Men	Women	Non-Binary	Transgender
38.00%	62.00%		

Age:

18-21	22-24	25-29	30-39	40-49	50+
89.00%		11.00%			

Racial Demographics:

Asian	American Indian / Alaska Native	Black	Hispanic	Native Hawaiian / Pacific Islander	White	2 or More Races
7.00%	0.00%	14.00%	32.00%		40.00%	3.00%

Our institution has also utilized the following data gathering tools:

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- National Survey of Student Engagement
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They help to inform our institution's civic learning and democratic engagement efforts by

How can you improve this section? Visit the *Strengthening American Democracy Guide* and review the *Guiding Questions* to ensure your *Landscape Section* includes everything that you feel should be addressed.

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:

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- We don't have someone whose job responsibility is to foster civic learning and democratic engagement on our campus.
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- The voter engagement work on our campus is very siloed within one office.
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- We have trouble engaging student leaders for the leadership of our initiative.
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We also know our campus faces the following challenges externally when it comes to get out the vote efforts and registering voters:

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

- Our institution's mission statement, values, and strategic plan mention civic learning and democratic engagement.
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- We have a coalition of people who are positioned to implement civic learning and democratic engagement on our campus.
- We have processes in place for registering large percentages of our students.
- We have ways in which we communicate voting information to our students.
- We use the resources readily available to develop and implement civic learning and democratic engagement on our campus.
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- We have sustainable or consistent funding.
- Voter engagement efforts on campus are nonpartisan.
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- 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.
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With this in mind, we have set the three goals that we would like to achieve over the next academic year:

1. Collaborate with the Political Science Department on an in-person Constitution Day event for the Fall of 2022
2. Host at least 7 voter registration events in different locations throughout campus to increase access, before the voter registration deadline in October.
3. Through events and tabling have at least 300 students make a pledge to vote in the November elections.

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

1. Increase voter turnout to 75% by the 2024 election.
2. Submit a proposal for a Coordinator of Civic & Voter Engagement by January of 2024.
3. Increase voter registration rate to 84% by the 2024 election.

How can you improve this section? Visit the *Strengthening American Democracy Guide* and review the *Guiding Questions* to ensure your *Goals Section* includes everything that you feel should be addressed.

VI. Strategy

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

These are tactics that we **are already doing** in the **short term** (within the next year):

- Host National Voter Registration Day event
- Participate in NJ Ballot Bowl Competition
- Plan social media and email awareness campaigns for the academic year.
- Present information about voting to classes.
- Host a voter registration workshop
- Re-enroll with TurboVote

These are tactics that we **plan to do** in the **short term**:

- Host workshops and voter registration tabling during New Student Orientation.

These are tactics that we **hope to do** in the **short term**:

- Host a speaker in honor of Constitution Day event with the Political Science Department.

These are tactics that we **are already doing** for the **long term** (beyond the next year):

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These are tactics that we **want to do** in the **long term**:

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These are tactics that we **hope to do** in the **long term**:

- Advocate for a full time position to oversee the Office of Civic & Voter Engagement.

How can you improve this section? Visit the *Strengthening American Democracy Guide* and review the *Guiding Questions* to ensure your *Strategy Section* includes everything that you feel should be addressed.

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

Our campus has access to our National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) data for 2020. In 2020 our registration rate was 82.7. In comparison to the data from four years prior in our NSLVE report, this rate increased.

In 2020, our voting rate was 85.9 and our voting rate among registered students was 71. During this year, our voting rate was higher than the national average.

The dramatic increase in not in-person voting due to the impact of COVID.

How can you improve this section? Visit the *Strengthening American Democracy Guide* and review the *Guiding Questions* to ensure your *NSLVE section* includes everything that you feel should be addressed.

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

- Post on the campus website
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We will collect feedback on this plan by:

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- Regrouping with campus coalition to debrief and reflect
- Integrating feedback collection into individual campus efforts
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We plan to evaluate our success by:

- Reviewing our NSLVE data and looking for improvements year over year
- 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
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How can you improve this section? Visit the *Strengthening American Democracy Guide* and review the *Guiding Questions* to ensure your *Reporting & Evaluation Section* includes everything that you feel should be addressed.