



Mount St. Joseph University
2022
Civic Engagement
Action Plan



Table of Contents:

I.	Executive Summary	2
II.	Leadership	3
III.	Commitment	4
IV.	Landscape	5
V.	National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE)	6
VI.	Goals	7
VII.	Strategy	9
VIII.	Reporting & Evaluation	11



I. Executive Summary

This action plan was developed by Caroline Meyer, Service Learning & Engagement Coordinator, to communicate the strategy for increasing both the voter registration and turnout at Mount St. Joseph University. The planned activities outlined here will be carried out over 2022-2023 Academic Year, on and around our campus in Cincinnati, Ohio.

The following groups will be supporting this work at Mount St. Joseph University in order to accomplish our goals and further institutionalize our commitment to civic learning, democratic engagement, and youth participation in elections: Career and Experiential Education Center, the Office of Student Affairs, Student Government Association (SGA), Black Student Union (BSU), Office of Mission Integration, the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, and the Election Engagements Coalition. In addition, the university will be working with external organizations: League of Women Voters, Hamilton County Board of Elections, Campus Vote Project, and the Democracy ALL IN Challenge.

II. Leadership

Caroline Meyer, Service Learning & Engagement Coordinator, will be overseeing the work to increase civic learning and democratic engagement on campus. The Career & Experiential Education Center will serve as the backbone office for this project providing the leadership for strategic planning, project coordination, and program evaluation. They will be supported in this work by:

ELECTION ENGAGEMENT COALITION:

Chair:

- Caroline Meyer, Service Learning & Engagement Coordinator

Faculty:

- Dr. Pete Robinson, Professor of History
- Dr. Jennifer Morris, Professor of History
- Dr. Jennifer Withrow, Assistant Professor of Social Work
- Roxana Hawkins, Assistant Professor of Social Work
- Dr. Richard Simon, Assistant Professor of Sociology
- Dr. Jim Bodle, Professor of Psychology
- Dr. BC Charles Liscombe, Associate Professor of Exercise Science & Integrative Health
- Cindy Shibinski, Faculty Instructor of Special Education

Staff:

- Dr. Rayshawn Eastman, Chief Diversity & Inclusion Officer/Title IX Coordinator
- Janet Cox, Dean of Students
- Amy Metzger, Health Services Manager
- S. Karen Elliott, C.P.P.S, D. Min., Director of Mission Integration
- Michelle Arnold, Assistant Director of Mission Integration
- Amanda Gratsch, Web Services & Technology Coordinator
- Scott Lloyd, Director of Library Services

Students:

- Jetta McCart - Visual Communication Design Co-op
- Tora Coleman - Service Learning Co-op

Community Partners:

- Campus Vote Project
- League of Women Voters of the Cincinnati Area
- Hamilton County Board of Election

III. Commitment

Our institution and our campus leadership demonstrate the commitment to improving civic learning and democratic engagement in multiple ways. Mount St. Joseph University (the Mount) champions election engagement because it complements our mission of "educating students through interdisciplinary liberal arts and professional curricula emphasizing values, integrity, and social responsibility." At the Mount, we are known for having strong community service, service learning, and student philanthropy programs; this is reflected in our inclusion in the President's Community Service Honor Roll in 2009, 2010, 2012, 2013, and 2015. While service to others is one of our core values, participation in the democratic process is also a cornerstone of what it means to be a responsible citizen.

Since beginning our democracy program in 2015, we have seen a significant increase in our student voter registration and our student voting rates on campus. By continuing to strengthen our democracy program, students will be more likely to develop across the engaged citizenship continuum, moving from personally responsible citizenship to participatory citizenship and then to transformative citizenship. Because of our success with turning students into student voters, NASPA designated Mount St. Joseph University as a Voter Friendly Campus in 2017-2018 and 2019-2020. Additionally, the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge recognized the Mount with the Silver Seal for our student voting rate in 2016 and the Gold Seal for our student voting rate in 2018 and 2020. We were also included in Washington Monthly's Best Colleges for Student Voting in 2018, 2019, and 2020. In 2020, Washington Monthly ranked Mount St. Joseph University as the 12th Best College for Student Voting in the United States.



IV. Landscape

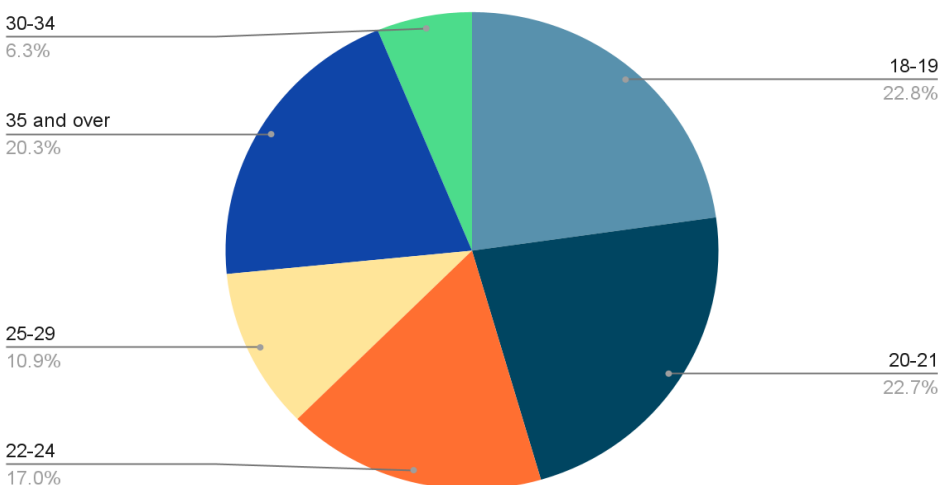
Mount St. Joseph University is a Catholic academic community grounded in the spiritual values and vision of its founders, the Sisters of Charity. Mount St. Joseph University is in Delhi, Ohio, only a few minutes from Downtown Cincinnati. The University educates its students through interdisciplinary liberal arts and professional curricula emphasizing values, integrity, and social responsibility. Members of the Mount community embrace values including excellence in academic endeavors, the integration of life and learning, respect and concern for all persons, diversity of cultures and beliefs, and service to others. The mission thrives on the Mount St. Joseph campus as a guiding principle. The Catholic Identity of the Mount is rooted in our Mission, in the Gospel values of service, compassion, and charity, and in the legacy and vision of our founders. As an institution Catholic in faith and tradition, we commit ourselves to create

an inclusive environment where persons of all faiths and no faith are welcomed. We expect and value mutual respect, by all and for all, in our pursuit of knowledge and truth and in our search for the sacred.

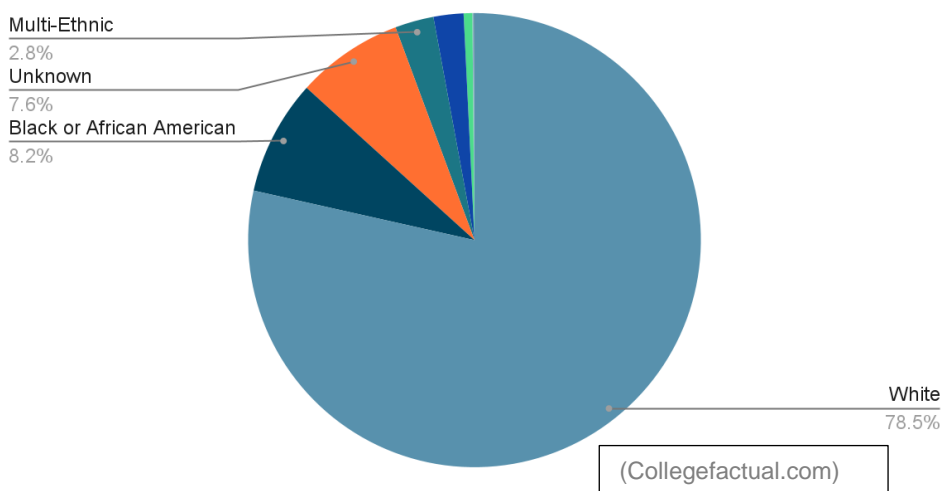
The Sisters of Charity founded Mount St. Joseph University in 1920 as Ohio's first Catholic university for women before becoming coed in 1986. The university remains heavily connected to the Sisters of Charity as one of its sponsored ministries. Mount St. Joseph strives to integrate its Catholic mission and founding charism in all areas of campus life including the academic, social, and spiritual development of the entire community. The university continues to provide a liberal arts education that heavily emphasizes values, integrity, and social responsibility.

Based on 2021 data from Mount St. Joseph University, our campus has 2,031 students with 73% undergraduate students, 19.9% graduate students, and 7.5% doctorate students. We have a large commuter population with 87.2% commuting. Our student population is also predominately female at 55% in addition to over 50% being student athletes.

Mount St. Joseph University Age Diversity Breakdown



Mount St. Joseph University Student Racial-Ethnic Diversity Breakdown



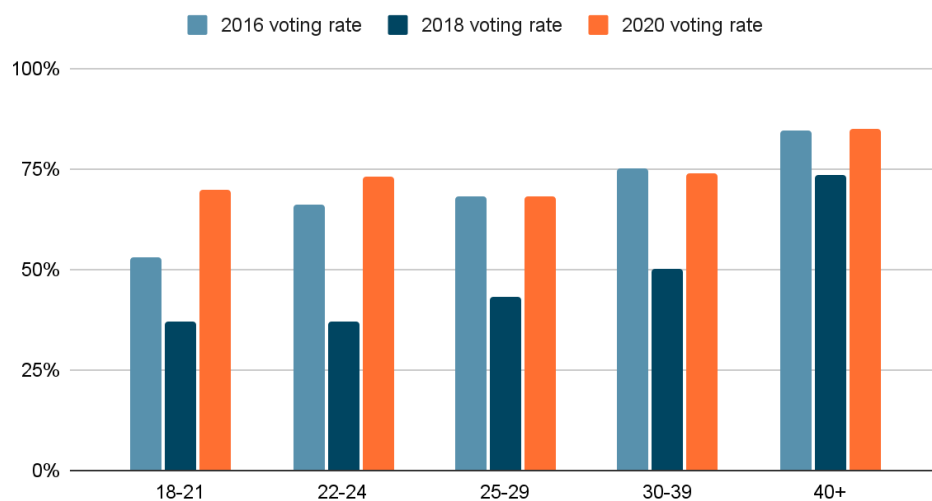
V. National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE)

Our campus has access to our National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) data for the 2016, 2018, and 2020 election cycles. For the 2020 presidential election, the Mount had an overall voting rate of 72%, which was higher than the national average of 66%. The Mount also had a student voter registration rate of 90% with 80% of those students voting. This is an increase compared to 2018, when 85.7% of Mount students were registered to vote and 44.4% of our entire student body voted. The student voter registration rate has continually increased, going up 1.2% from 84.5% in 2016 to 85.7% in 2018 before jumping 4.3% from 2018 to 2020 and reaching 90%. However, while the registration rate has increased, the voting rate severely declined during midterm elections in 2018. The voting rate dropped by 23.4% from 2016 to 2018 going from 76.6% to 51.9% before rebounding back up 27.6% with the student voting rate reaching 72% for the 2020 presidential election.

Year	Student Voter Registration Rate	Voting rate of registered students	Student Voting Rate
2016	84.5%	76.6%	64.7%
2018	85.7%	51.9%	44.4%
2020	90.0%	80.0%	72.0%

In addition, the voting rate for students 40 years old or higher has been relatively stable between presidential and midterm election years, going from a voting rate of 84.5% in 2016 to 73.5% in 2018 before bouncing back up to 85% for the 2020 presidential election. This is in contrast to the 18-21-year-old students who are less likely to vote during the midterm elections, with a voting rate of 37% in 2018 before rebounding to 70% in 2020. All other age groups also experience a significant drop during the midterms. Because of this information, we are setting goals to increase engagement outside of presidential election years.

Voting Rate by Student Age



VI. Goals

Our main goal is to maintain voter engagement despite it not being a presidential election year for the 2022 election cycle. Our 2018 data dips between the presidential election years of 2016 and 2020. While the registration rate has increased each year, the voting rate dropped drastically in 2018, going from 64.7% in 2016 to 44.4% in 2018. This rebounded back up to 72% in 2020 for the presidential election. Ohio has a senator and governor election in the fall. Despite it not being a presidential election year, we still want our students actively involved in the democratic process and to participate in this year's coming election. The awareness of this decrease in engagement in non-presidential years has informed our short-term and long-term goals of increasing engagement in midterm election cycles.

Short-term Goals:

1. Maintain registration rate of 85% of students by November 2022
2. Have a 65% voter turnout on November 2022 election day
3. Have 55% of 18-21-year-old students vote in the upcoming election

Long-term Goals:

1. Create and implement a strategy to engage more students during midterm election years
2. Incorporate civic engagement into our first-year experience course
3. Give every student a platform to voice their opinion under the 'every student matters' mindset

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

Our campus faces the following challenges internally when it comes to "get out the vote" efforts and registering voters:

- Mount St. Joseph is a small Catholic university with strong ties to its mission and values. However, this can cause the university community to be reluctant to engage in politics on campus based on conflicting political beliefs.
- Students can be overwhelmed with the amount of emails they receive and often overlook information. It is important to explore other avenues where students might receive information more readily such as Blackboard and social media.
- Mount St. Joseph does not have a Political Science program, therefore there is a shortage of politically engaged courses as well as visible faculty to reinforce civic engagement.

Our campus has the following strengths when we approach voter engagement work:

- The Mount's mission statement, values, and strategic plan mention civic learning and democratic engagement and encourages participation through life and learning.
- There are staff members across campus and in the Career & Experiential Education Center that are designated to foster civic learning and engagement on our campus.
- We have an Election Engagement Coalition of staff, professors, and students who are positioned to implement civic learning and democratic engagement on our campus.
- With its smaller size, the close-knit nature of the campus community allows for more personal and authentic interactions when encouraging students to participate in engagement opportunities.



VII. Strategy

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

Voter registration

1. Table at Welcome Week so students have the opportunity to register at orientation and find information about registering to vote.
2. Host an event on campus to get as many students as we can to register to vote on National Voter Registration Day.
3. Disseminate campus-wide email reminders on voter registration and update website voter registration information on the Mount's external website and Mount's internal website.

Voter education

1. Continue relationship with local League of Women Voters and distribute their nonpartisan voter guides (at the campus library and over email).
2. Offer Constitution Day programming and voter registration tables in our classroom building lobby.
3. Voter information flyers regularly distributed with non-partisan details on candidate issues, voter registration information, and promotions for early voting.
4. Send mass emails regarding voter information and registration in the beginning weeks of the Fall 2022 semester. The email will include links to our website and other resources on voting, as well as information for upcoming events.
5. Promote the Ohio Student Voter Summit and the regional Campus Compact dialogue opportunities.
6. Host debate watch parties, during which students will learn about candidates and their various viewpoints related to their candidacy and the election.
7. Coordinate with faculty members to encourage their students to register to vote in the first weeks of classes, including speaking to first year experience classes to inform students on how to vote.

8. Organize social media campaigns to get students active and voting on campus by sending regular updates through various social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) to remind students of important deadlines and other pertinent information regarding the elections, deadlines, and the candidates.

Ballot access

1. The Mount serves as a local polling location. This will be advertised to students who will also be encouraged to work as poll workers.
2. Provide proof of residency letters for students who registered to vote using their dorm address.
3. Assist students with voter registration checks, polling location checks, absentee ballot requests, and absentee ballot checks.
4. Disseminate campus-wide email reminders about absentee ballot access.

Voter turnout

1. Disseminate campus-wide email reminder about the general election.
2. Promote key election dates in print marketing and online.
3. Facilitate a “Why Are You Voting This November?” social media campaign.
4. Facilitate a “March to the Polls” on Election Day.



VII. Reporting & Evaluation

This action plan has been created to meet the requirements set by both the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge and the Voter Friendly Campus Designation. It will be emailed internally to members of our campus coalition. In addition, it will be made available on our website for students, faculty, and staff to have access to as well as highlighted in our monthly newsletter in Fall 2022.

Mount St. Joseph plans to evaluate our success within the campaign by reviewing our NSLVE data and looking for improvements year over year as well as noticing what strategies worked for Mount St. Joseph compared to those that did not yield much turnout. After a debrief at the end of each semester, we will revisit our goals and adjust our short and long-term goals accordingly.

In addition to reviewing our results from the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE), we will conduct campus-wide surveys about the students' knowledge of voting tools and resources available to them. We would like to know if our civic engagement efforts are effective in increasing student participation in the areas of voter registration, education, and participation. This real-time data will allow our coalition to make adjustments to better meet the needs of the community.

Once all the data has been compiled and assessed, this information will be shared with the Mount St. Joseph University community. We will also post the results on the Mount St. Joseph website for the public to access.

Career & Experiential Education Center

5701 Delhi Rd.
Cincinnati, OH 45233
(513)244-4888



MOUNT ST. JOSEPH
UNIVERSITY