



Political Engagement and Voting Campus Action Plan 2020

Prepared by the BergVotes Collective

Muhlenberg College's mission statement affirms our campus' commitment to developing independent critical thinkers who are engaged in civil debate, equipped with ethical and civic values, and prepared for lives of leadership and service (Mission Statement 2014). To support our mission and these values, BergVotes, in collaboration with the campus community, have created this Action Plan and strategies to increase political discourse and engagement on campus.

BergVotes is a non-partisan student movement dedicated to raising political and civic engagement on campus. Working in collaboration with BergVotes is the BergVotes Collective, comprised of faculty, staff and students to support voter engagement and education activities.

Strategic Priorities:

1. Increase Muhlenberg College student voter registration rate of eligible students to 85%.

In 2016 Muhlenberg College student voter registration rate of eligible students was 59.2% an increase of 5% from 2012 (NSLVE 2017). In 2018 our registration increased to 81% (NSLVE 2019).

In order to increase voter registration rate of eligible students BergVotes, in cooperation with the Office of Community Engagement, Office of Housing and Residential Life, and other campus clubs and offices will:

- a. Register incoming first year students during Move-In Day and New Student Orientation;
- b. Table at Seegers Student Union during high traffic times of day to register students to vote at Muhlenberg and their home states;
- c. Remind students to register before campus speaking events related to the election;
- d. Post voter registration information in the BergBulletin and the campus calendar;

- e. Dorm Storm residence housing to register new voters; and
 - f. Attend Foundations for Student Success classes to educate students about voting.
2. Increase Muhlenberg College student voter turnout rate by 55% in 2020?

In 2016 the voter turnout rate for eligible students was 49.3, which was below the mean of all colleges and universities nationwide of 50.4% but an increase of almost 9% from 2014.

To increase voter turnout BergVotes, in collaboration with campus departments and other student clubs, will:

- a. inform/remind students about absentee ballot deadlines particularly in PA, NY and NJ;
 - b. dorm storm (hang door tags) in the days prior to the November election.
 - c. ask students to sign voter pledge cards and place these cards in a public location prior to and on Election Day;
 - d. remind students through email, social media and campus webpage to vote and check that they are registered to vote;
 - e. work with the Muhlenberg Weekly to run articles about voting; and
 - f. use social media to publicize voting on campus.
3. Provide information and opportunities to discuss issues related to policies and candidates in advance of the primary and general elections including:
- a. hosting at least 1 issue round table per semester;
 - b. hosting Issues Expo with other student clubs prior to primary and general elections;
 - c. Residence Life will host a Candidate Expo for Lehigh County political candidates before general election;
 - d. Academic Departments will host Election Series and Center for Ethics series that address public policy issues connected to the election; and
4. Election Day will be a day full of activities and programs sponsored by multiple campus departments and BergVotes. Activities include:
- a. BergVotes Information Table during Precinct operating hours (7am-8pm);
 - b. The Office of Housing and Residence Life will host Election Day celebration in a visible location until 5 pm;
 - c. BergVotes will manage an Election Reflection room for students to share election day thoughts;
 - d. Multicultural life will host food truck from 5-7 pm to celebrate voting;
 - e. Political Science Department will host Election Watch Party from 8-?
 - f. Campus debrief tbd.

5. Continue to engage with Lehigh County Voter Registration Office and offer Poll Worker services.

In 2016 34 students served as Poll Workers (12) and Spanish language interpreters (22) for Lehigh County.