



Muhlenberg College 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 Beth Halpern, Director- Community Engagement to communicate our strategy for increasing both the registration and turnout rates of voters at Muhlenberg College. The planned activities outlined here will be carried out over 2022-2023 Academic Year, on and around our campus in ALLENTOWN, Pennsylvania.

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

- Undergraduate Students
- Faculty
- Civic/Political/Community Engagement Center
- Student Affairs Staff
- Academic Affairs Staff

The mission of our initiative is:

- BergVotes is a non-partisan student movement dedicated to raising political awareness and increasing political 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.

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

Beth Halpern- Director, Community Engagement, Michele Moser Deegan, Dean of the College for Academic Life, BergVotes will be overseeing our work to increase civic learning and democratic engagement on campus. They will be supported in this work by:

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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 Weekly at

In the event that our leadership leaves campus or is no longer involved in this work, we have a succession plan in place. There are multiple people overseeing the work!

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

- ALL IN Democracy Challenge, Campus Election Engagement Project, CIRCLE, League of Women Voters (Lehigh Valley),

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, Muhlenberg College aims to develop independent critical thinkers who are intellectually agile, characterized by a zest for reasoned and civil debate, committed to understanding the diversity of the human experience, able to express ideas with clarity and grace, committed to lifelong learning, equipped with ethical and civic values and prepared for lives of leadership and service. We also see this same commitment reflected in our institution's values. They state, "Muhlenberg College aims to develop independent critical thinkers who are intellectually agile, characterized by a zest for reasoned and civil debate, committed to understanding the diversity of the human experience, able to express ideas with clarity and grace, committed to lifelong learning, equipped with ethical and civic values and prepared for lives of leadership and service."

In addition, our campus has mentioned civic learning and democratic engagement in their strategic plan, stating it is in the mission and vision statements. We also have had a senior leader commit to civic learning and democratic engagement on our campus.

On campus, we've seen:

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

- Voting in student body elections
- 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
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We can point to the above institutional commitments to support our work.

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 2067.

Enrollment Data:

Undergraduate	Graduate	Full Time	Part Time
99.00%	1.00%	1.00%	99.00%

In-State	Out-of-State	International Students	On-Campus Residents	Commuter
30.00%	70.00%	1.00%	99.00%	1.00%

Gender Demographics:

Men	Women	Non-Binary	Transgender
39.00%	61.00%		

Age:

18-21	22-24	25-29	30-39	40-49	50+
94.00%		6.00%			

Racial Demographics:

Asian	American Indian / Alaska Native	Black	Hispanic	Native Hawaiian / Pacific Islander	White	2 or More Races
3.00%		4.00%	8.00%		75.00%	3.00%

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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- It is hard to maintain a cohort and energy in perceived "off" times (ie non national elections)

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.
- We have someone whose job responsibility is to foster civic learning and democratic engagement on our campus.
- 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.
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- 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.
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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:

Register first years and sophomores at a higher rate than at present
Host a successful Issues Expo (student attendance and participation high)
Create thorough guide for what is on the ballot

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

Assist with voter registration off campus
Integrate into structures more fully (e.g., orientation)
Find/access better resources for students to vote in their home communities in an informed way

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):

- voter registration at orientation, voter registration tables, voter registration at events, what's on the ballot, issue roundtables, issues expo, voter information/questions answered via instagram, get out the vote events, local election meet the candidates events

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

- voter registration at orientation, voter registration tables, voter registration at events, what's on the ballot, issue roundtables, issues expo, voter information/questions answered via instagram, get out the vote events, ensure people know the pathways to voting here or in their home communities.

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

- Integrate into orientation schedule a bit more

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

- voter registration at orientation, voter registration tables, voter registration at events, what's on the ballot, issue roundtables, issues expo, voter information/questions answered via instagram, get out the vote events, local election meet the candidates events

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

- voter registration at orientation, voter registration tables, voter registration at events, what's on the ballot, issue roundtables, issues expo, voter information/questions answered via instagram, get out the vote events, local election meet the candidates events

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

- integrate into classes more, increase voter turnout for local elections

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 91.5. In comparison to the data from four years prior in our NSLVE report, this rate increased.

In 2020, our voting rate was 82.6 and our voting rate among registered students was 90.1. 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
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- 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
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- Black
- Hispanic
- White
- 2 or More Races

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

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We will collect feedback on this plan by:

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- Regrouping with campus coalition to debrief and reflect
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We plan to evaluate our success by:

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- 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.