

Nazareth College Campus Democracy Action Plan 2021 - 2022

Executive Summary:

This document serves as Nazareth College's commitment to democratic engagement. The purpose of this action plan is to cultivate and empower our students to make educated and informed decisions in upcoming elections and to successfully register to vote and cast their ballots. Our action plan addresses four areas (voter registration, voter education, voter participation, and advocacy) to support our students and their right to vote. The plan is one that is ongoing as Monroe County holds elections every year. Focus shifts between federal, state, and local elections depending on the year.

Aligned with Nazareth College's mission to foster integrated learning through reflection, educating whole persons who are guided by empathy, committed to equity, and prepared to lead innovation of our time, NazVotes is dedicated to engaging students in the upcoming elections. Building upon the NSLVE reports from 2012, 2014, 2016, 2018, and 2020 this action plan was developed with Nazareth campus faculty, staff, and students to increase the number of students, faculty, and staff who vote in all elections and to increase knowledge and engagement of students on issues that affect their communities.

The NazVotes program is responsible for the intentional and meaningful implementation of our action plan with leadership and support from the Center for Civic Engagement, the Center for Life's Work, and other members of our campus community. Jazzmyn Ivery-Robinson, Career Coach & Coordinator in the Center for Life's Work, is the contact for our action plan.

Leadership

Nazareth College provides courses and programming each year to encourage political and voter engagement. The NazVotes program consists of partnerships with faculty, staff, student representatives, administrators, and community partners. The Center for Civic Engagement is the primary department responsible for coordinating and implementing the college's initiatives to increase civic learning

and democratic engagement on the Nazareth campus. The working team consists of the Director, NazVotes coordinator, graduate assistant, and student workers.

The Civic Engagement, Center for Life's Work is dedicated to enhancing students' college experience by offering a variety of community service opportunities, academic service-learning courses, and other community engagement initiatives — locally, regionally, nationally, and globally. Nazareth is nationally recognized for leading the way for colleges engaged with the community.

The NazVotes team works on a weekly basis with a graduate assistant and three student fellows. The NazVotes team executes the following projects and more across the college campus:

- National Voter Registration Day
- Vote Early Day
- Voter Registration Drives
- Voter Registration Training
- In Classroom Presentation
- Virtual Presentations
- Social Media promotion
- Debate Watch Parties
- Election Inspector Recruitment
- Constitution Day

Campus Partnerships

- Center for Life's Work
- Community & Belonging
- Academic Affairs
- Alumni Engagement
- Athletics
- Center for International Education
- Center for Student Success
- Central Mail Services
- Library
- Marketing & Communications

- Residential Life
- The Charles Mills Writing Center
- Center for Spirituality

Student Clubs & Organizations

- American Sign Language Club
- Art Club
- Black Student Union
- BLM @NAZ
- Environmental Sustainability Club
- Lambda Association (LGBTQ+)
- Undergraduate Association

Community Partnerships

- Monroe County Board of Elections
- League of Women Voters Rochester, NY
- Indivisible
- ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge
- Ask Every Student
- Students Learn Students Vote
- Campus Vote Project

Commitment

Nazareth College and its leadership are committed to improving civic learning and democratic engagement. The college's commitment to civic engagement and social justice is continually addressed through campus events, curricular and co-curricular activities through various departments across the campus each year. Through the NazVotes program, students can retain paid fellowships as incentivization to engage their communities. NazVotes serves as a hub for political and voter engagement efforts across the college with the goal of strengthening the civic culture and active citizenship of our college community. This program fits into the institution's new Strategic Plan of changemakers, equity mindset, expansive naz, engaged with impact, and campus-connected.

Landscape

Nazareth College has a voting rate of 36.2% in 2018 as reported by the National Study for Learning, Voting and Engagement (NSLVE). Looking at our [student enrollment data](#) can help inform opportunities for civic learning, voter and democratic engagement at Nazareth College.

Enrollment Status

- 2,147 Undergraduate students
 - 2,063 Full-time
 - 84 Part-time
 - 482 First-Time Freshmen
 - 99 Transfers
- 644 Graduate Students
 - 387 Full-time
 - 257 Part-time

Geographic Origin

- 1,843 Undergraduates & 585 from New York State
- 268 Undergraduates & 35 from elsewhere in the United States
- 60 from outside of the United States

Curriculum

Democratic engagement exists across multiple disciplines and fields of study at Nazareth College. With over 60 majors, Nazareth college offers courses that actively incorporate understandings about civic, democratic, and political engagement. Some of the courses that we provide are:

| Course Section/Name | Course Description with Outcomes |
|----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| SPF - 204/ History & Philosophy of Education | This course provides the contextual knowledge, analytic strategies, and reflective stance fundamental to the practice of critically engaged professional educators for inclusive and equitable schools. Students will examine the social history of schooling in the US, learn how to analyze the philosophical perspectives underlying various educational arrangements, and use reflection to interpret experience and feedback. Through classroom study and community projects, students will enhance their ability to prepare youth for democratic citizenship. |
| PSC -341/ Healthcare Politics | Why is the United States the only advanced democratic nation which does not guarantee all citizens access to health care? Why do Americans spend more on health care than any other nation, yet have poorer health outcomes than citizens of other comparable countries? This course examines the structure of American health care system and compares it with those of other advanced capitalist democracies. Focusing on historical and political explanations of American exceptionalism, we ask whether recent developments suggest a possibility of convergence among the major industrialized countries. |
| RES- 396/ Religion & Politics | The complex relationship between religion and politics in the United States and elsewhere. Topics: the rights of religious minorities; litigation over religious liberty and non-establishment; the influence of religious organizations on American government; partisanship among religious voters; religion's influence on persons' political worldview and perception of political issues; religious issues in international relations. |
| PSC -340/ Campaigns/Voters. Elections | Electoral politics in the United States are examined in a study of national, state and local elections. Topics include a study of historical and contemporary political |

| | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | campaigns, theories and patterns of voting, the expansion of suffrage, electoral reform, media coverage and opinion polling, and the interpretation of electoral outcomes. |
| EQS - 101/ ST Equitable Spaces | Special Topics: a series of courses that advance diversity, equity, and inclusion. The topics change each semester, connecting with social and cultural dynamics impacting the United States or global systems. Includes experiential learning component. |

Co-Curricular

The Center for Civic Engagement, along with other campus departments and student organizations is responsible for co-curricular civic learning and democratic engagement. Some of the ways we support civic, political, democratic, and voter engagement are:

- Classroom visits with the purpose to educate and encouraging young voters
- Restructuring of the NazVotes website with ongoing revisions for up-to-date sharing of communication.
- Newsletters that were sent to students related to various political and voter information
- Voter Registration Drives
- Establishing a social media presence by creating an active NazVotes Instagram account
- Establishing resources for supporting advocacy
- Assisting students with completing voter registration forms and requesting absentee ballots
- Provided transportation for students to the polling site
- Webinars on Free Speech

- Advocacy 101 trainings
- Life Prep Program

NSLVE

We use data from the Monroe County Board of Elections and the [National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement \(NSLVE\)](#), to assess and understand the democratic and political climate of our campus community. We utilize the NSLVE report to understand our student’s voter registration and voting rates from 2012, 2014, 2016, and 2018.

- [2012 Report](#)
- [2014 NSLVE Report](#)
- [2016 NSLVE Report](#)
- [2018 NSVLE Report](#)

Nazareth College Student Voting Rates

| Year | Rate |
|-------|-------|
| 2012* | 45.7% |
| 2014 | 13.0% |
| 2016* | 52% |
| 2018 | 36.2% |

Nazareth College Student Voter Registration Rate

| Year | Rate |
|-------|-------|
| 2012* | 72.8% |
| 2014 | 62.7% |

| | |
|-------|-------|
| 2016* | 79.3% |
| 2018 | 78.6% |

Nazareth College saw a **23.2% point increase** in our students' 2018 voting rate compared to our 2014 voting rates. Turnout increased for the 18- 21 age group were widespread, with virtually every campus in the study seeing an increase over 2014 rates.

The average institutional voting rate among the 1,000+ institutions in the **2018 study was 39.1%**, nearly 20 percentage points higher than **2014's national average turnout rate of 19.7%**. While Nazareth is still below the national average by 2.9% (*our 2018 rate was 36.2% versus the national average of 39.1%*), we've come a long way since 2014 when we were *6.7 percentage points behind* the national average with our 13% voting rate.

We are excited about the increase in our students' voting rate and contribute it to the collaborations the Center for Civic Engagement has had across campus, in particular with:

- Student Activities & Leadership
- History & Political Science
- Development and Government Relations
- League of Women Voters
- Monroe County Board of Elections

The Center for Civic Engagement continues to collaborate with these departments and others on voter registration, education, and turnout initiatives and we look forward to seeing our voting rate continue to increase. We know the civic

habits these efforts foster of "advancing knowledge, sharpening analytical and critical thinking capacities, and enhancing students' empathy and agency".

Internal Barriers

Since 2018, the number of internal barriers has been reduced. Historically, internal barriers included a lack of sustainable funding, student employment, and dedicated leadership. With the establishment of the NazVotes program, concerns relating to funding and leadership have been addressed. Through the help of enhanced student employment temporary funding for student employment has been addressed.

External Barriers

Due to the COVID-19 global pandemic, the polling site was relocated to an off-campus location thus causing an external barrier. Additional external barriers include changing state election laws due to the pandemic, and voting qualifications in the town of Pittsford. We are currently working with the Monroe County Board of Elections to have the polling site returned to Nazareth College campus as well as keeping students informed on election laws and voting qualifications.

Resources

We draw on support from community partners, staff, faculty, administrators, residents, and community leaders. Some of the national tools we utilize include:

- ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge Resource HUB
- The National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement
- Campus Election Engagement Project
- Election Imperatives 2020

- National Association of Student Personnel Administrators

Goals

Building on the progress of past years, Nazareth College aims to achieve the following goals for the 2021- 2020 Academic year as we

Long Term Goals

- By 2028 increase student voter registration for the presidential/general election to 85%.
- By 2029 increase student voter registration for local elections to 83%.
- By 2028 increase the student voting rate to 62%.
- By 2029 increase student voting rate to 50%.
- Continue to serve as a hub for political engagement efforts across the college with the goal of strengthening the civic culture and active citizenship of our college community.

Short Term Goals

- By 2022 we will increase voting rates among underrepresented groups such as
 - 18 - 21 age range
 - Students who identify as men
 - Diverse minority groups
 - Fields of study including Liberal Arts & Sciences and Humanities, Psychology, Communication, Health Professions
- By 2022, increase student voter registration rate to 80%.

- By 2022, increase student voting rate to 40%.
- Identify and strengthen partnerships with student organizations, departments, and the community through increased partnerships and collaboration.
- Increase voter engagement in institutional programming and training.
- Establish an equitable spaces course for intersectionality and voting rights.
- Expanding inclusive programming, workshops, etc.

Strategy

_____ In alignment with the college's commitment to fostering integrated learning through reflection, educating whole persons who are guided by empathy, committed to equity, and prepared to lead innovation of our time, NazVotes is committed to student voter engagement which aligns with the college's values of equity, community, courage, empathy, transformational learning, as well as being non-partisan, accessible, inclusive, and data-informed.

Our strategic efforts for the upcoming 2021 -2022 academic year address voter registration, voter education, voter participation, and advocacy.

[NazVotes Calendar](#)

Reporting

The 2021 - 2022 Campus Action Plan for Nazareth College will be available to the Nazareth community on the NazVotes page. Reporting from the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) are shared with the Nazareth Community and reported on the campus action plan.

Evaluation

Continuous evaluation will be conducted for our action plan prior to, during, and after implementation to assess the effectiveness of our commitment to voter engagement. Yearly assessments will be conducted to improve outreach and create high-impact opportunities for young voters.