

Ohio Wesleyan University
Fall 2024 All In Action Plan



DEMOCRACY MATTERS

SAGAN NATIONAL COLLOQUIUM

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Background

Founded in 1842, Ohio Wesleyan University is one of the nation's premier liberal arts universities. Located in Delaware, Ohio, the private university offers more than 70 undergraduate majors and competes in 24 NCAA Division III varsity sports. Through its signature experience, the OWU Connection, Ohio Wesleyan teaches students to understand issues from multiple academic perspectives, volunteer in service to others, build a diverse and global perspective, and translate classroom knowledge into real-world experience through internships, research, and other hands-on learning. Ohio Wesleyan is featured in the book "Colleges That Change Lives" and included on the U.S. News & World Report and Princeton Review "Best Colleges" lists.

The Sagan National Colloquium was established in 1984 as part of an effort to revitalize Ohio Wesleyan's commitment to civic education. The Colloquium "explores an issue of national and international significance from multiple educational angles. The Colloquium forges links between liberal arts learning and the lifelong civic art of informed, involved citizenship."

The 2024-25 Sagan National Colloquium (hereafter referred as SNC) theme is "Democracy Matters" and is co-presented by the Arneson Institute for Practical Politics and Public Affairs and the Department of Politics and Government. The Arneson Institute for Practical Politics and Public Affairs was founded in 1947 by Politics and Government Professor Ben Arneson. His vision was exemplified in the pledge that all of his students signed upon completion of his courses. It read: "With a view to serving the public interest and regardless of the nature of my future vocation I pledge that, upon leaving college, I will devote a portion of my time to active and definite participation in public affairs." While students no longer officially sign pledge cards, Ohio Wesleyan Alumni continue to embody the spirit of public service that animates the SNC, the Arneson Institute, and the PG department.

The 2024 Presidential Election is critical to the future of American democracy. It promises to be close and contentious, and has already demonstrated the potential for protest and political violence. As part of its ongoing commitment to civic education, Ohio Wesleyan University presents "Democracy Matters": a colloquium that investigates the challenges to American democracy and highlights the dedicated public servants trying to protect the American experiment. "Democracy Matters" encourages students to participate in the election while providing them with the context and skills necessary to make informed decisions about their future.

Democracy Matters is co-sponsored by the Sagan National Colloquium, the Arneson Institute for Practical Politics and Public Affairs, and OWU's Department of Politics and Government. Generously funded by the Sagan family, the Colloquium explores an issue of national and international significance from multiple educational angles and forges links between liberal arts learning and the lifelong civic art of informed, involved citizenship.

The Sagan National Colloquium is a non-partisan educational endeavor and does not endorse specific parties, positions, or candidates.

Activities and Events

Historically, the Get Out The Vote efforts were carried out by the PG Department with funding support from the Arneson Institute. One professor recruits interested students to man a voter registration table in the student activity center during the lunch hour in the weeks leading up to the Ohio voter registration deadline.

That professor also works with the local Board of Elections to ensure the registered students had the proper paperwork/identification to be able to vote on election day as well as organize the shuttle service to campus precinct locations on election day. However, with the Arneson Institute organizing the SNC this academic year, we have expanded to include the following events that will encourage students to participate in the election while providing them with the context and skills necessary to make informed decisions about their future as opposed to just providing the opportunity for registration and ballot access. Here are the events and activities scheduled for the fall semester (and are included in the action plan)

1. Get OWU The Vote

Date: Sept. 3 - Oct. 4 from 11am-2pm and during SNC events

Description: OWU's existing GOTV efforts and brand them as part of the SNC. These efforts have proved critical to past elections and their success can be seen in the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement data that was shared with OWU in 2022. While OWU lagged behind our sector in the 2018 report, we now are even with our sector in voter registration and actual voting. Improvements this year include a partnership with the Ohio League of Women Voters to support student volunteers at the registration tables, updates to the [student voter information website](#), and the creation of a [student voter FAQs tool](#) in light of the changes to accepted identification requirements for voting in person on Election Day in Ohio. We continue to keep track of students who register as Delaware County voters and provide a shuttle to those who want to vote on Election day. We also continue to support and track students who seek assistance with registering to vote and/or request an absentee ballot for their homes rate. We hope to use our involvement with 2024 All In as an opportunity to learn more about our mobilization efforts and record keeping so we can propose a more comprehensive voter engagement plan with trackable goals for student volunteers, registration, outreach, absentee ballot requests, and shuttle passengers for 2026 and beyond.

2. Lunch and Learn: Decode the Debates

Date and Time: Sept. 11 from 12:10-1 p.m.

Description: Did you watch the presidential debate? Did you find it confusing? Annoying? What are the candidates arguing about? Can a president even DO anything about the economy, reproductive rights, the environment? Come talk to your professors and fellow students about the debate. Bring your lunch and chat with faculty about the upcoming election. We will watch a few clips and try to decipher what's at stake, answer your questions about the election, and talk about where you can find out more about the issues that concern you.

Who: Dr. Ashley Biser, Dr Brianna Mack, Dr. James Franklin, Politics and Government Student Board

3. Lunch and Learn: The Election and the Environment

Date and Time: Sept. 30 from 12:10-1 p.m.

Description: The 2024 election has major implications for environmental policy, and yet the environment is often missing from election coverage. At this Lunch and Learn, Dr. Laurie Anderson, Dr. John Krygier, and Dr. Franchesca Nestor will share their perspectives on "The Election and the Environment." A guide comparing the major parties on environmental issues created by students will

be available. Students from several ENVS courses will contribute background for issues the panel will discuss.

Cosponsors: SNC, ENVS Sustainability Taskforce, Politics and Government

4. Challenging the System: Electoral Reform on the Ballot

Date: Oct. 2 from 7-8:30 p.m.

Description: This panel will engage the audience in the process of thinking through alternatives to the current electoral system as part of an effort to encourage participation in the electoral process. Moderated by Dr. Franchesca Nestor, the panel will begin with a short overview of different types of electoral reform, before hearing from representatives from Rank the Vote Ohio, Fair Districts Ohio and others involved in efforts to try to make our political institutions more responsive to citizens' concerns.

5. Ensuring Election Integrity

Date and Time: Oct. 17 from 6-7:30 p.m.

Description: As concerns about election security rise, this panel will highlight the dedicated citizens who work to ensure the integrity of elections. You may have heard about security threats on American Elections in 2016. Or heard allegations of the "Big Steal" in 2020 talked about in the news. But do you know about ALL of the steps in place to keep elections secure, accurate, and accessible to all registered voters? As we prepare for Election Day 2024, join us to learn about the entire Election Day process, how voting works and election security and integrity. Come ask the experts any and all questions you may have about how your vote is counted. Moderated by Dr. Brianna Mack

6. Eddy Memorial Lecture on World Politics

Date and Time: Nov. 13 at 7 p.m.

Description: The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

Who: Marc Lynch, Ph.D., professor of Political Science and International Affairs at George Washington University and a visiting scholar at The Ohio State University's Mershon Center for International Security Studies. Lynch is also the director of the Project on Middle East Political Science, a contributing editor for The Washington Post's former Monkey Cage political science page, and more. His presentation is Ohio Wesleyan's 35th annual John Kennard Eddy Memorial Lecture on World Politics sponsored by the International Studies Program and the Department of Politics and Government.