



# 2022 Democratic Engagement ACTION PLAN

---

## Rollins College

Center for Leadership and Community Engagement

1000 Holt Avenue  
Winter Park, FL 32789  
Phone: 407.691.1232

# Overview

Rollins College educates students for global citizenship and responsible leadership, empowering graduates to pursue meaningful lives and productive careers. We are committed to the liberal arts ethos and guided by its values and ideals.

Rollins College is a private, four-year college with an enrollment of approximately 2,500 undergraduate students. At Rollins College, The Center for Leadership & Community Engagement (CLCE) supports opportunities for students, faculty, and staff to get involved in their communities and become leaders to create positive change. CLCE administers The Rollins College Democracy Project (DP), an initiative intended to increase and elevate the civic learning and democratic engagement of the Rollins community, which includes students, staff, faculty, and community partners. The DP initiative derives its comprehensive goals from *A Crucible Moment: College Learning & Democracy's Future*, and therefore seeks to "foster a civic ethos that governs campus life, make civic literacy a goal for every graduate, integrate civic inquiry within majors and general education, and advance civic action as lifelong practice."

As a nonpartisan, student-led initiative, The Democracy Project is intended to increase and elevate the civic involvement of the Rollins community by preparing students with the knowledge and skills to impact social change, spark civic interests, and find their voice within local and global democracies. Through voter registration and education, this initiative strives to empower students as the next generation of active citizens by fostering a civic ethos and advancing civic action.

## Strategic Goals for 2022-2023

- Achieve a campus-wide voter registration rate of 90%.
- Achieve a campus voting rate of at least 50% for the Midterm Elections in 2022.
- Ensure all students sign-up for the TurboVote platform, with a strategic focus on those planning to vote in another county or state.
- Provide multiple opportunities for students to "Vote Together" i.e. transportation to the polls for Early Voting and on Election Day.
- Create space for deliberative dialogue around current issues in politics to allow students to consider issues from multiple perspectives.
- Increase campus awareness about local issues i.e. in the City of Winter Park, Orlando, Orange County, etc.
- Collaborate with other on-campus organizations such as Athletics, Fraternity and Sorority Life, etc. to increase the number of students who engage directly with the Democracy Project.
- Promote opportunities for students to attend off-campus events with organizations such as the Orange County League of Women Voters, People Power for Florida, etc.

This report was developed by:

- Bailey Clark, Associate Director, Center for Leadership & Community Engagement
- Chloe White, Student Coordinator, The Democracy Project

# Coalition

## Administrative Leadership

---

The administration at Rollins College has continually shown its' support for civic engagement by dedicating concerted resources towards efforts such as the Democracy Project. Funding for the Democracy Project comes from the Center for Leadership & Community Engagement within the Division of Student Affairs. The Associate Director in CLCE, Bailey Clark, supervises a Graduate Assistant (GA) who serves as the direct staff advisor to the Democracy Project. The GA supervises a Student Coordinator (an on-campus position with a minimum of 8-10 hours/week) and the Student Coordinator leads the Democracy Project Student Ambassadors, a group of approximately 10-15 students who apply for volunteer leadership positions and meet weekly to discuss civic engagement efforts on campus. During the 2021-2022 academic year, the Democracy Project team functioned well, as each student Ambassador was delegated a specific focus area, for which they would be responsible, and would then report back to the Student Coordinator at the weekly meetings. Members were in charge of overseeing the social media for the organization, the planning of civic holiday celebrations, data analysis, the execution of voter registration drives, and curating informative events on certain hot topics. This allowed the team to be more efficient, and host more events than in previous years, maximizing campus outreach.

Support for increased democratic engagement on the Rollins College campus comes from a variety of levels. Administration, faculty, staff, and students all play a crucial role in following through on the campus commitment to continue democratic engagement work. President Grant Cornwell has been very supportive of this work. President Cornwell engages in this work on the campus level and on the national level by attending campus forums, sending emails in support of voter engagement, and the use of TurboVote. Cornwell is also a member of the board of directors for AAC&U and joined the Florida Campus Compact Executive Committee. In conjunction with the Campus Compact 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Conference, he signed the Action Statement of Presidents and Chancellors.

In April 2020, President Cornwell signed the Higher Education Presidents' Commitment to Full Student Voter Participation, stating "I commit to providing my institution with the leadership and support to fully engage in all elections- and voting-related learning opportunities," by:

- Becoming ALL IN - Join the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge.
- Striving toward Full Student Voter Participation - Designate staff (administration and faculty) to lead efforts to strive for full participation among the campus community.
- Making a Statement - By signing on to the Higher Education Presidents' Commitment to Full Student Voter Participation, college and university leaders are making visible and public their commitment to their campuses.

## Student Leadership

---

The Democracy Project initiative is student driven and relies on the commitment of multiple undergraduate student leaders. Members of the Democracy Project (called Ambassadors) are recruited in fall of each academic year through an application process. Students are

required to submit their resumé and a statement of interest to allow them to share their passion for this work, or any potential ideas that they want to bring to the organization. In 2021, the Student Coordinator and Graduate Assistant worked hard to ensure that there was a diverse mix of students, as to better represent the student body of Rollins. Students from all grades, majors, races, genders, political views, and even international students made up the team. Each year, applications are screened by the Associate Director of CLCE and the Democracy Project Graduate Assistant. The student coordinator for the Democracy Project is chosen in the spring. This is a paid position through the CLCE. Applications are received and reviewed by the office's staff during the recruitment period for all paid student positions. The current coordinator must reapply if they wish to be considered for the position again the following year.

## **Student Coordinator**

The Democracy Project Student Coordinator is responsible for facilitating the development and implementation of the entire Democracy Project initiative. The position is filled annually and seeks a student leader who is professional, highly organized, passionate about leadership and the democratic process, committed to bipartisanship, and an out-of-the-box thinker.

### **Essential Duties & Responsibilities**

- Supporting and advising DP Student Ambassadors, which includes facilitating weekly meetings, assigning tasks, and ensuring accountability.
- Delegating certain roles and duties to Ambassadors and ensuring that they are fulfilled efficiently and to a high standard.
- Represent the student voice for all DP activities and serve as the DP representative at various meetings, events, and service opportunities both on and off-campus. This includes representing DP on the Student Government's Board of Student Organizations.
- Develop collaborative partnerships with different clubs, organizations, faculty, and departments across campus and in the Central Florida area to further students' engagement in the democratic process.
- Help plan, implement, and facilitate various DP programs, such as: voter registration drives, Constitution Day, National Voter Registration Day, political lecturer events, Politics on Tap, Debate Watch Parties, Candidate Forums, etc.
- Market and promote DP initiatives to the Rollins community through email, social media, website, etc.
- Maintain transparent and timely communication with the Associate Director, Graduate Assistant, Student Ambassadors, and community partners
- Commit to a minimum of 8 hours per week, including 6 office hours in the Center for Leadership & Community Engagement.

## **Student Ambassadors**

In addition to the Student Coordinator, there are approximately eight Democracy Project Student Ambassadors recruited annually to implement the initiative's programming on campus. The goal is to recruit diverse ambassadors who will encourage various groups of students to get involved i.e. athletics, Greek life, first-year students, science majors, etc. Both

the Student Coordinator and the Student Ambassadors report to a Graduate Assistant within the Center for Leadership & Community Engagement.

## Community Partners

---

Democracy Project is not a third-party voter registration organization and therefore relies heavily on community partners to register students to vote. Additionally, partner organizations provide support for voter education and information about upcoming elections. In 2021, in partnership with the Orange County League of Women Voters, the Democracy Project was able to get all of its members certified to register voters, so long as two members were present. This allowed the organization to host an increased number of voter registration drives, as well as allowing Ambassadors to register students in their classrooms and residence halls.

### Orange County Supervisor of Elections Office

The mission of the Orange County Supervisor of Elections Office (OCSEO) is to ensure the integrity of the electoral process, enhance public confidence, and encourage citizen participation. Each year, the Democracy Project partners with representatives from OCSEO to host voter registration drives on campus and ensure all students have up-to-date information on local candidates, polling places, etc.

### Orange County League of Women Voters

The Orange County League of Women Voters (OCLWV) encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government. OCLWV regularly partners with the Democracy Project to educate voters. In Fall 2021, all Democracy Project Ambassadors joined the League, and became certified through the organization to register voters.

### The City of Winter Park

The Democracy Project hosts Town Halls and Meet and Greets with candidates running for local office in the City of Winter Park. This year, DP Student Ambassadors were also encouraged to attend City Commission meetings. In the Spring 2022 semester, there was a City of Winter Park Commissioner Election. DP members met with the candidates, and were encouraged to work on any campaigns that they felt aligned with, in order to gain insight into local politics. DP also hosted an event on campus for the candidates to debate local issues. This boosted student awareness of the election, and in conjunction with voter registration drives, allowed for more students to register to vote on campus so that they could become Winter Park voters. Students met with candidates, heard their views on certain issues, and saw first-hand how impactful these local elections can be for our campus and student body.

### Internships

Every semester, dozens of Rollins students serve as interns with elected officials. Recent examples include U.S. Representative Stephanie Murphy and Florida House Representative Anna Eskamani. This year, DP Ambassadors worked with local City Commissioners on their campaigns, local initiatives for the City of Winter Park, and interned with elected Representatives at the State level.

## Campus Partners

---

## Student Organizations

The Democracy Project partners regularly with the Rollins Democrats and the Rollins Republicans to bring candidates and elected officials to campus. The Democracy Project intentionally partners with the Rollins Republicans and Rollins Democrats to ensure both parties have a voice on campus. During the 2021-2022 academic year, DP partnered with other student organizations on Politics On Taps in order to boost awareness and turnout for these events. We hosted Politics On Taps regarding the following; Critical Race Theory in partnership with the Black Student Union; reproductive rights with Voices (the on campus feminist organization) and Her Campus (the on campus female-run blog); the Ukraine-Russia conflict with support from the SGA. DP also has plans to collaborate with Spectrum (the LGBT student organization) on a Politics On Tap event regarding the 'Don't Say Gay' Bill, and with the Sustainability organization regarding environmental issues and climate change proposals.

## Faculty

This year faculty played a critical role in the success of the Democracy Project and civic engagement in general at Rollins College. DP sponsored a speaker from the Political Science Department's speaker series, Dr. Pippa Norris, who talked to students about 'cancel culture'. Faculty also are an integral part of Politics On Tap events. Faculty who were featured in this year's events came from the Departments of Political Science, Philosophy, Public Policy, SWAG (Sexuality, Women, and Gender Studies), Sociology, and Economics. The DP is currently planning to host future events with faculty also from the Environmental Studies and Biology Departments.

## Residential Life & Explorations

The Residential Life & Explorations (RLE) team typically provides numerous opportunities for Student Ambassadors to register voters i.e. move-in day, first-year orientation, and first-year seminars. Due to the limitations and changes to these usual events because of COVID-19, we participated in these events virtually. However, this meant that we saw much lower turnout than usual, and so we had to come up with new ideas to increase voter registration. Rollins offers RCC courses to all freshman, which serves as an introductory college course, and has students in the same RCC will live in the same hall (to create a living/learning community). We therefore reached out to the RCC professors, and registered freshman students through their RCC classes. We also hosted evening voter registration drives in the freshman dorms, with the help of the RAs (multiple members of DP are Residential Assistants so this was fairly easy to organize. We hosted these events with food and games, which meant that not only did students come to the event to register, but also allowed for them to stay and discuss elections of political topics with our DP Ambassadors. The success of these events will allow for them to continue for the upcoming year.

## Greek Life

Approximately 30% of the Rollins campus is affiliated with Greek Organizations. We saw a significant level of overlap between the demographics of students who were in Greek Life, and those that had lower voter turnout, according to our 2020 post-election data. DP therefore decided to target the Greek community through a Voter Registration competition. We told the fraternities and sororities that the organization with the highest percentage of eligible voters who are registered to vote, will win t-shirts and a donation to their philanthropy. The competition lasted for the two-week period before the Winter Park local election, and saw an increase in the number of Greek Life affiliated students who registered and voted in the election.

# Commitment

For more than 125 years, Rollins has adhered to one overarching belief: College is about more than preparing for a career. It's about learning to think critically. It is about discovering how one individual can positively impact the world. To that end, Rollins strives to enable individuals to see the bigger picture, to understand how areas of knowledge are interrelated, and to view learning as a lifelong endeavor. As a result, our graduates are prepared to succeed in any career, but they are also prepared to pursue lives of meaning and purpose.

Rollins College strives for an engaged campus, defined by Campus Compact as, “one that is consciously committed to reinvigorating the democratic spirit and community engagement in all aspects of its campus life: students, faculty, staff and the institution itself. The engaged campus recognizes that knowledge cannot be separated from the purposes to which it is directed. The engaged campus is not just located within a community, it is intimately connected to the public purposes and aspirations of community life itself. The engaged campus is unable to separate its unique responsibility for the development of knowledge, from the role of knowledge in a democratic society to form the basis for social progress and human equality.”

In May 2017, at the conclusion of a year of rigorous research to establish our benchmark institutions, diligent work by 13 strategic planning task forces, and collaboration among all constituencies, the Rollins College Board of Trustees approved the College's 2017 Strategic Framework and strategic themes.

Undergirded by the three purposes of our strategic planning (strengthening the integrity of our mission, strengthening our market position, and building a strong sense of shared vision) the three themes that emerged in the planning process were: engaging our students, delivering on our promises, and strengthening our strategic assets. These themes will continue to guide the 2021 cycle of strategic planning.

## **Engage Our Students**

*We will build upon our tradition of innovation in our educational programs so that we become a national model for engaged learning.*

## **Deliver on Our Promises**

*We will commit to the academic and post-graduate success of each of our students.*

## **Strengthen Our Strategic Assets**

*We will invest in areas essential to our prosperity and competitive advantage: our people, our workplace culture, our campus, and our strategic information.*

## Landscape

Democratic Engagement is part of the culture at Rollins College. It is embedded in both curricular and co-curricular programs.

For the 2021-2022 academic year, Democracy Project Student Ambassadors set a goal of ensuring that at least 85% of eligible students are registered to vote. This was accomplished through partnerships with on-campus organizations and community-based organizations such as the Orange County League of Women Voters, the Orange County Supervisor of Elections Office, and People Power for Florida. These community-based organizations held voter registration drives directly on our campus several times per semester. This gave students the opportunity to easily register, whether it be for the first time or to update their address. Registration drives were held during National Voter Registration Week, orientation week, in the weeks leading up to our local election, and at many other large-scale campus events. This year, DP hosted 13 voter registration drives, registering 96 students at in-person events and an additional 79 via the TurboVote platform.

Additionally, we hosted four Politics on Taps this past semester, with turnout exceeding 50 students at each event. Politics on Tap allows for students to come together with professors and specialists in order to learn about and discuss current events and policy issues. Events discussed this past semester included the implications of the Russia-Ukraine invasion, and the effects on higher education of Critical Race Theory being banned in Florida. These events allow for all students, regardless of prior knowledge, to become informed and engage in a dialogue with expert faculty on issues that could directly impact their lives.

The Democracy project also supported the student-organized Disability Empowerment Week on campus, by sponsoring a documentary screening surrounding the need for greater support for those with disabilities. DP also sponsored a speaker series with Pippa Norris, a renowned Harvard lecturer for Political Science, who discussed the current political and social climate, and the implications of 'cancel culture'.

The Democracy Project frequently partners with student organizations for co-curricular programs and events. A recent critical success in voter registration was partnering with Fraternity and Sorority Life. At Rollins College, Greek life makes up around 30% of the student population. They created a friendly competition that encouraged Fraternities and Sororities to compete with one another to register the most members to vote and/or register non-Greek life friends.

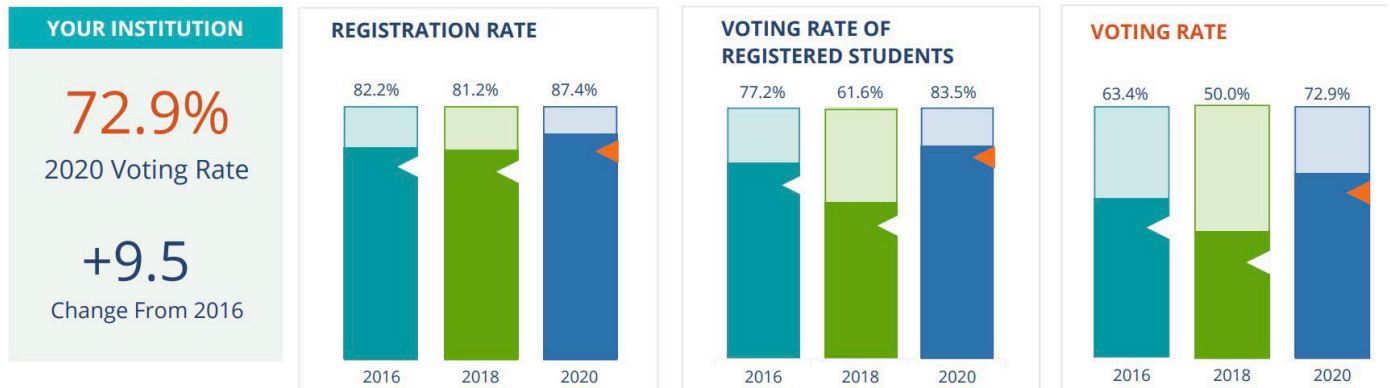
In the classroom, Rollins students are furthered exposed to topics surrounding civic engagement. This year alone over 30 courses explored topics such as environmental activism, diversity in American education, political ethics, and conflict policy.

### Highlights from Rollins College's 2020 NSLVE Report

- The registration rate of Rollins College students overall was 72.9%, compared to 66% for all institutions.
- The voting rate increased by 9.5% from 2016.



- The registration rate increased by 5% from 2016.
- We saw a 14% increase in mail-in or not-in-person voting, but a decrease in early or in-person voting.



## Courses Offered in 2021-2022 Academic Year

### Fall 2021

- Media, Peace, and Justice
- Leadership and Effective Communication
- Public Economics
- Diversity in American Education
- Political Economy of Environmental Issues
- Environmental Planning
- Intro to Public Health
- Impending US Crisis
- The Rise and Fall of Democracy
- Critical Race Theory in US
- Intro to American Politics
- Problems in Political Thought
- Climate Change Politics
- Theories of Democracy
- Issues in Public Policy/Economics
- Disability and Social Change
- US Food Policy in a Changing World
- Environmental Activism
- Ethics and Social Justice
- Black Lives Matter
- The American Presidency

### Spring 2022

- The Truth About Fake News
- Culture and Health in the US
- Communication Campaigns
- Health Policy and Advocacy Communication
- Incarceration and Inequality
- Economics of Contemporary Issues
- Traditional Town Planning
- Health Equity
- US-China Relations
- How Democracies Die
- American Civil Rights Law & Policy
- Peace and Conflict Studies
- American Social Policy
- American Political Thought
- Gender Politics
- Social Problems
- Food Democracy
- Music & Politics in the Americas

# Goals

## Long-Term Goals

(Beyond 2022)

- 90% Voter Registration by 2024
- 75% Voter Turnout by the 2024 Presidential Election

## Short-Term Goals

(2022 Midterm Election Goals)

- Achieve a campus-wide voter registration rate of 90%.
- Achieve a campus voting rate of at least 50% for the Midterm Elections in 2022.
- Ensure all students sign-up for the TurboVote platform, with a strategic focus on those planning to vote in another county or state.
- Host an Absentee voting party where students can all send their ballots together
- Provide multiple opportunities for students to “Vote Together” i.e. transportation to the polls for Early Voting and on Election Day.
- Create a voter registration competition between all residential communities on campus; targeting first and second year students
- Host a “Post Poll Party” with food, activities and live election results
- Create space for deliberative dialogue around current issues in politics to allow students to consider issues from multiple perspectives.
- Host a series of discussions for international students to present the ways in which they can be involved in the American Political system
- Increase campus awareness about local issues i.e. in the City of Winter Park, Orlando, Orange County, etc.
- Collaborate with other on-campus organizations such as Athletics, Fraternity and Sorority Life, etc. to increase the number of students who engage directly with the Democracy Project.
- Promote opportunities for students to attend off-campus events with organizations such as the Orange County League of Women Voters, People Power for Florida, etc.

# Strategy

## Politics on Tap

Every month throughout the academic year, the Democracy Project selects a panel of faculty member to moderate deliberative dialogue on current issues in American politics. Democracy Project collaborates with another student organization, who helps to advertise the event, and co-host. These will continue into next year, with the addition of elected officials or experts beyond our own faculty, to make the panel more well-rounded and to attract more students. We are currently planning a Politics on Tap discussing the ‘Don’t Say Gay’ bill, with potentially having Rep. Anna Eskamani joining the panel, and having Spectrum (our LGBT+ organization) co-sponsor.

## Constitution Day

Every year, the Democracy Project celebrates Constitution Day on September 17<sup>th</sup> and this year was no exception. Student leaders hand out pocket Constitutions and conduct information sessions on the U.S. Constitution during community common hour.

## Classroom Presentations

Typically, faculty teaching first-year seminar courses partner with a representative from the Democracy Project to register voters and provide information about upcoming elections and other ways to get involved in democratic engagement initiatives. In 2022, we plan to expand beyond just first-year seminar courses. We saw from our previous NSLVE report that business students had the lowest reported turnout in elections, and so we plan to target introductory business classes also, and host voter registration drives located outside the Business Studies department. We also noticed a slight drop in the voting rate for our students aged over 50. These students attend our Holt evening school, which meets after we typically host our voter registration drives. We are planning to therefore host drives later in the evening, and ensure that our other events are advertised throughout the buildings where classes are being held.

## Rally to the Polls

The Democracy Project will provide multiple opportunities for students to “Vote Together.” The team will host at least two events to walk to the Early Voting location, provide transportation to the polls throughout the day on Election Day, and host a absentee voting party for the first time.

## After Polls Party

The Democracy Project will once again host an election results watch party on Mills Lawn and also celebrate those who voted by passing out t-shirts.

## Debate Watch Parties

The Democracy Project will host debate watch parties in Dave’s Boathouse for Florida’s Governor race and other local elections. Students will have the opportunity to discuss their thoughts about the debate both before and after the livestream. Refreshments will be provided. The DP team will utilize this helpful document from the [League of Women Voters](#) when planning the events.

## #RollinsVotes

Rollins has a webpage dedicated to voter education: <https://www.rollins.edu/rollins-votes/>  
This website will be updated to include all relevant information for the Midterm Elections.

## Reporting & Evaluation

The Democracy Project team will track voter registration numbers in a spreadsheet provided by the Orange County League of Women Voters. The team will also work closely with the Ask Every Student initiative to better track how many students have been given election information directly from the Democracy Project Ambassadors.

Rollins College participates in the National Study of Learning, voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) sponsored by the Institute for Democracy & Higher Education at Tufts University. Collected data in the future will be analyzed for trends and responses. Relevant portions of this information may potentially be shared with collaborating departments and organizations as we continue to further develop our strategic plans and look for areas of need or improvement. Finally, these results will also inform and be shared in future iterations of this plan.