

SUNY: Purchase College 2024 Nonpartisan Democratic Engagement Action Plan

Developed by: Patricia Bice & Melissa Glazer

Executive Summary:

This nonpartisan democratic engagement action plan was developed by Purchase College, SUNY in New York for the 2024 election. The purpose of this action plan is to increase nonpartisan democratic engagement and student voter registration, education, and turnout in the 2024 election. The goal for Purchase College, in collaboration with NYPIRG's Democracy and Voter Empowerment Project, for the 2024 election is to register 600 students to vote. NYPIRG's Project Coordinator at Purchase, Ines Schmitt Alvarez, will lead this initiative in coordinate with Student Affairs and Enrollment Management to:

1. Disseminate campus wide emails
2. Conduct class presentations to emphasize the importance of registering to vote and participating in elections
3. Table at various locations on campus, specifically high trafficked areas, such as campus eateries
4. Canvas the campus and engage with students directly about the voting registration, etc.
5. Encouraging students to check their voter registration status by providing the official government website

Leadership:

Our leadership team includes the following, campus groups, and organizations:

- Patricia Bice, Vice President for Student Affairs & Enrollment Management
- Melissa Glazer, Assistant Dean for Student Affairs
- Ines Schmitt Alvarez, NYPIRG's Project Coordinator at Purchase College
- Jessica Bullock, Associate Director of Student Engagement and Involvement

Commitment:

Purchase College's commitment to the ALL IN democracy challenge supports our commitment to "thinking wide open." The College is committed to ensuring that our students actively engage

in academic programs and campus programming the enriches their understanding of their rights and appropriately challenges their beliefs to ensure we are graduating the most well-rounded individuals. Our policies and procedures are also designed to empower students to use their First and Fifteenth Amendment rights while respecting the rights of all community members to have a safe and harassment-free educational experience. Altogether, their education and personal experiences should help cultivate an environment that invigorates our 18 – 21-year-old students to exercise their right to vote and have their voices heard on a local, state, and federal level.

To ensure a nonpartisan approach, Purchase College works closely with NYPIRG. NYPIRG is a non-partisan organization. NYPIRG’s Democracy and Voter Empowerment Project defends democracy and fights to empower communities barred from civic power. NYPIRG has been a leader in student and community voter registration and mobilization efforts for decades. Hundreds of thousands of students have registered to vote, registered others to vote, and built their civic participation through NYPIRG. This peer-to-peer civic engagement helps increase student participation in our democracy while building trust and ownership over our democratic institutions. Students working with NYPIRG have also played a leading role in advocating for laws that strengthen the right to vote and improve the electoral process.

NYPIRG works directly with our students to encourage all students, after registering to vote, to check their voter status to ensure it is active. Student are always directed by the College and NYPIRG to connect with NYPIRG in their office or via phone with any questions.

Before Election Day, NYPIRG hosts events, makes classroom visits, and/or sets up a table on campus to help students identify their voting locations. On Election Day itself, NYPIRG tables near the Clock Tower and continue to circulate around campus, encouraging students to vote.

Our President, Dr. Milagros Peña, intends to sign the ALL IN Higher Education Presidents’ Commitment to Full Student Voter Participation.

Landscape:

Purchase College is a public 4-year institution and joined the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge in 2016. Our institution is designated as the following: Minority-Serving Institution, Hispanic-Serving Institution.

Our campus demographic and voting data: 406 registered voters.

Purchase College, SUNY has 3,300 students.

Purchase College, SUNY has authorized the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) and received campus voting data from the 2022 election. Our 2022 data showed that our voting rate was 32.1% in 2022, which was a decrease of 12.9% in 2018. While our rates decreased, in-person voting increase to 43%, our not-in-person rates increased by 11% between 2018-2022. Overall, our voting by age decreased by a combined percentage of 17% for voters between the ages of 18 – 24.

While our numbers have decreased Purchase College is aware that that voting rates among young people have been growing recently. However, the turnout rates of older generations is still great than younger voters. The voting rates in New York are in the bottom half of the nation. Students, however, have the most at stake – the decisions that politicians make on issues like

tuition hikes, housing costs, criminal justice reform, and climate change affect students and our families' everyday lives, which are things that also affect higher education in general.

As such, Purchase College participates in the following initiatives to support the development and implementation of our nonpartisan democratic engagement efforts on campus: National Voter Registration Day (2018, 2021). As indicated in previous parts of this plan our partnership with NYPIRG has been invaluable in educating our students and ensuring they know how to register, obtain absentee ballots, and how to vote on campus while in attendance.

Goals:

Our institution's nonpartisan democratic engagement goals are:

1. Register 600 students for the 2024 elections
2. Increase student voter registration rate to 40% in 2024 and 50% in 2026. Note, 2022 was 32.1%
3. Increase student voter turnout rate to 70% in 2024 and 80% in 2026.
4. Add voter registration to new and transfer student orientation for fall 2025.

Strategy:

In order to obtain our goals of increasing voter registration, Purchase College will collaborate with NYPIRG's Democracy and Voter Empowerment Project, for the 2024 election is to register 600 students to vote. We plan to do this by:

1. Disseminate campus wide emails
2. Conduct class presentations to emphasize the importance of registering to vote and participating in elections
3. Table at various locations on campus, specifically high trafficked areas, such as campus eateries
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Our campaigns will be crafted and executed around the following important voting dates:

- September 9-13: Disability Voting Rights Week
- September 10: CUNY Presidential Debate Watch Party and Discussion
- September 17: National Voter Registration Day
- October 26: Voter registration deadline for the November general election; Early Mail Voting online application deadline; Absentee Voting online application deadline
- October 26-Nov 3: Early Voting Period starts for the general election
- November 5: General Election Day

Evaluation:

We will evaluate our action plan in the following ways:

Purchase College will use the National, Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) to evaluate the increase of student voting by comparing our campus voter turnout and voter registration rates to past elections to measure progress on increasing both.

Reporting:

Our campus action plan will be posted on our campus page on ALL IN's website <https://allinchallenge.org/campuses/suny-purchase/>.

Our institution has given ALL IN permission to publish our past NSLVE reports, which can also be found on our campus page above.

To ensure transparency, the action plan will also exist on our Voting Registration website - <https://www.purchase.edu/offices/student-affairs-and-enrollment-management/voting-registration/>

Additionally, NYPIRG will be able to utilize NSLVE data and our action plan in order to aid use in achieving our goals.