



**SAINT LOUIS**  
**UNIVERSITY**  
— EST. 1818 —

## **ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge**

### **2018 Action Plan**

#### **Saint Louis University Contact**

Leah Sweetman, PhD

Assistant Director, Center for Service and Community Engagement

Email: [leah.sweetman@slu.edu](mailto:leah.sweetman@slu.edu)

Phone: 314-977-4214

#### **Voter Engagement Committee**

The Saint Louis University Voter Engagement Committee includes representatives from the following units:

Office of the Vice President for Student Development

Office of the Dean of Students

Busch Student Center

Department of Political Science

International Student Services

Student Government Association

Center for Service and Community Engagement

Government Relations, Office of the General Counsel

Student Involvement Center

Campus Ministry

Housing and Residence Life

Center for Global Citizenship

Marketing and Communications

Political Round Table

#### **Others who will Help Implement the Action Plan**

Vice President for Diversity and Community Engagement

Vice President for Student Development

Office of the University President

Dean of Students

Assistant Vice President for Communications

Faculty members across campus

#### **Local and National Community Partners**

Board of Election Commissioners, City of St. Louis

National Voter Registration Day

Missouri Campus Compact

Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning & Engagement

National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE)

HeadCount

Campus Election Engagement Project  
Voter Friendly Campus Designation (NASPA and Campus VOTE Project)

**Goals**

1. Saint Louis University would like to increase student political engagement, and not only during the Presidential election season. Through voter education efforts and opportunities to discuss ballot issues and relevant public policy, we will work to promote the importance of local and state political engagement, as well as national issues and races during non-Presidential election seasons.
2. Through on-campus voter registration drives and heightened communications, Saint Louis University would like to increase the percentage of students who are registered to vote.
3. The Voter Engagement Committee would like enhance the working relationship between Academic Affairs and the Division of Student Development at Saint Louis University, particularly around voter education, voter registration, and Get out the Vote.

**ACTIVITIES**

**Voter Registration**

The student organization, Political Round Table, is active in voter registration drives on campus, as well as other student groups and student leaders. There are tables and representation at several campus events, as well as ongoing voter registration in the Center for Service and Community Engagement. Saint Louis University is a National Voter Registration Day partner. Student leaders and the Center for Service and Community Engagement planned campus activities to support the day and will continue that effort in September 2018. In order to facilitate voter registration on campus, a student intern will join the voter engagement committee in the spring. The intern will work closely with the nonprofit organization HeadCount to help students register where they want to vote. In addition, University Marketing and Communication and the Division of Student Development provide information on the voter registration process, including relevant deadlines.

**Voter Education**

Saint Louis University has an established voting website, <https://www.slu.edu/life-at-slu/center-for-service/voter-info.php>, which provides links to local and national voter registration resources, polling place information, election calendars, and voter identification information.

The Voter Engagement Committee helps promote and sponsor campus events on relevant policy issues, as well as elections, laws, and polling. For example, in 2016, the Departments of Political Science and Communication sponsored a number of speaker events, including presentations from their own faculty on polling, voter demographics, and voter rights. The School of Law hosted a session on Voter ID laws. There will be a number of events planned for 2018.

Because Saint Louis University is a faith-based institution, the Center for Campus Ministry has provided copies of *An Ignatian Examen for Civic Life*, produced by the Ignatian Solidarity Network. The document, which is a call to be contemplatives in action, offers the opportunity for reflection and encourages readers to talk with God in specific ways about the interrelationship between Gospel values and political engagement.

In June 2017, SLU sent a faculty and staff member to the Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement (CLDE) Meeting organized by The American Democracy Project (ADP), The Democracy Commitment (TDC), and NASPA. Leah Sweetman from the Center for Service and Community Engagement was able to participate in a panel presentation on the Voter Friendly Campus designation and share effective practices for voter turnout. The SLU team will continue to dialogue around the importance of student civic engagement and how they can effectively support voter education at the University.

### **Ballot Access**

For the midterm elections of November 2018, Saint Louis University is pursuing an on-campus polling place, to be located in the Busch Student Center. SLU was also a polling place during the 2012 and 2016 Presidential elections and during the 2014 Midterm elections. Students who live on-campus and register using their campus address should be able to vote in the Busch Student Center. The Center for Service and Community Engagement staff and student leaders will assist students who are voting absentee with the out-of-state voting information that they need. There is a small group of engaged students who would like to appeal to the Board of Election Commissioners to grant Saint Louis University a regular polling place. As it currently stands, the Board of Election Commissioners has created a special precinct for Saint Louis University, and it only offers an on-campus polling place for Presidential and Midterm elections. While the voter engagement committee is organizing the polling place for November 2018, there will also be conversations about what it would take for a polling place to exist for local and state elections.

### **Get Out the Vote**

Students and staff from the Center for Service and Community Engagement, University Marketing and Communications, as well as the Student Government Association will help raise awareness about the August primaries and November election through printed fliers and electronic signage in campus buildings as well as email, social media, and other internal communications. The committee will continue to work with local election officials to recruit students to be poll workers. The Study Abroad Office will communicate with students who are studying abroad during the fall 2018 semester. The communications will include information about voter registration and absentee voting.

### **Timeline**

The committee will meet monthly during the spring semester and every 2-3 weeks from mid-August through November 2018. After Election Day, the Center for Service and Community Engagement will continue to share events, reports, and relevant activities related to voter education, voter registration, and voter turnout. Over the year, the Center for Service and Community Engagement will convene meetings of smaller subgroups, particularly around local elections, as well as with additional academic units.

### **EVALUATION**

Saint Louis University will utilize NSVLVE as well as political involvement indicators through the annual Student Survey on Service. Saint Louis University recognizes that the student voting rate was 54% during the 2016 Presidential election, up 3.9% from 2012. There was only an 18% student turnout rate during the 2014 Midterm elections. The University has set a goal of 20% for the upcoming 2018 Midterm elections. Additional voting and registration rates, as well as goals are listed in the table below.

### Saint Louis University

<b>Presidential Elections</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2016</b>
Voter Registration Rate	66%	68%
Voting Rate	50%	54%
Voting Rate of Registered students	66%	68%

<b>Midterm Elections</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2018 Goals</b>
Voter Registration Rate	65%	<b>67%</b>
Voting Rate	18%	<b>20%</b>
Voting Rate of Registered students	27%	<b>30%</b>

The Center for Service and Community Engagement administers the annual Student Survey on Service to all students toward the end of the spring semester. The survey includes a scale that assesses political involvement. The scale distinguishes among different levels of involvement, from having political conversations, to simple actions, to deeper engagement. The survey will be administered in April 2018.

In addition, the Center for Service and Community Engagement will pay close attention to SLU's NSLVE data, in the hopes that there can be an increase in voter turnout for the 2018 Midterm elections. SLU's 2014 Midterm voting rate of 18% was lower than national averages and that of other private institutions. It is clear to the Voter Engagement Committee that there is room for improvement, but increases will likely be incremental over the next several election cycles.