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May 27, 2020

Catherine Fish

Associate Director

ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge

Civic Nation

1156 15th St. NW, Suite 1000

Washington, DC 20005

Dear Catherine,

I'm pleased to submit the final draft of our Campus Action Plan from St. Norbert College.

We very much appreciate our collaboration with ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge, and we are grateful for the feedback we received on our first draft of this plan. This expanded plan includes our response to that feedback, along with contingency plans for continuing complications from the pandemic.

This plan was developed in consultation with several community partners and other offices on campus, but remains the primary responsibility of the Norman Miller Center for Peace, Justice & Public Understanding.

with appreciation,

Robert A. Pyne, Th.D.

Director of Community Engagement

Director, Norman Miller Center for Peace, Justice & Public Understanding

Campus Action Plan for Voting

Final Draft (May 27, 2020)

St. Norbert College

De Pere, Wisconsin

Executive Summary

This plan was drafted by Dr. Robert A. Pyne, Director of the Norman Miller Center for Peace, Justice & Public Understanding at St. Norbert College in consultation with a number of other campus offices and community partners. These partners will be listed below.

This action plan will guide our efforts for the 2020 calendar year. It will review actions for the Spring Primary Election (February 18, 2020) and the Spring Election and Presidential Preference Primary (April 20, 2020), and will set the course for the General Election (November 3, 2020).

While the plan focuses on efforts undertaken on behalf of students at St. Norbert College, some elements of the plan will also benefit the local community. Specifically:

1. The designation of the campus as a polling place for in-person absentee voting,
2. Community voter education, registration, and mobilization programs led by students,
3. Celebrations of the 100th anniversary of women's suffrage in America, and
4. Students training and service as poll workers.

The plan will be implemented by a committee of SNC staff, students, and community members, under the leadership of the Norman Miller Center.

Leadership

The individuals currently making up our working group are:

- Dr. Robert Pyne, Director of the Norman Miller Center (chair)
- Dr. Charles Jacobs, Professor of Political Science
- Dr. Wendy Scattergood, Assistant Professor of Political Science
- Dr. Grazia Villarroel, Associate Professor of Political Science
- Dr. Angel Saavedra Cisneros, Assistant Professor of Political Science
- Dr. Brandon Bauer, Associate Professor of Art
- Mike Peckham, Director of Residence Life
- Jill Olson, Program Coordinator, Norman Miller Center
- Avery Garcia, Assistant Director, Multicultural Student Services

- Carey Danen, City Clerk of De Pere
- Charlotte Goska, Coalition of Voting Organizations of Brown County
- H. James Smet, Coalition of Voting Organizations of Brown County
- Kevin Welch, Coalition of Voting Organizations of Brown County
- Diana Delbecchi, Green Bay Public School District
- Elise Skarda, student
- Jaxsen Schermacher, student
- Emma Johnson, Student Community Organizer (4th year), Norman Miller Center
- Leah Jobe, Student Community Organizer (3rd year), Norman Miller Center
- Kodee Zarnke, Student Community Organizer (4th year), Norman Miller Center
- Hattie Kruschek, Residence Life, Student Community Organizer (4th year), NMC
- Bethany Kreklow, Student Community Organizer (1st year), Norman Miller Center
- Reilly Harrington, NextGen America

We will also invite student leaders from the College Republicans and the College Democrats, along with other interested students. It is common for student organizations or campus departments to promote voter registration or education independently. We are trying to coordinate all those efforts—not to restrict them, but to collaborate efficiently and effectively.

As in the past, we are working closely with the Coalition of Voting Organizations of Brown County and the City Clerk of De Pere. New collaborative partners worth highlighting this year include:

- Residence Life—coordinating a contest between residence halls for the percentage of residents voting.
- Dr. Brandon Bauer (Art)—incorporating civic engagement into his course, Art in a Democratic Society, with all students training and serving as poll workers and creating signage for campus.
- Dr. Angel Saavedra Cisneros (Political Science)—Incorporating civic engagement into two of his classes, with all students working on voter registration, education, and mobilization.

This group will meet as needed, and has been actively engaged in electronic communication for several months. We are also coordinating efforts to seek additional grant funding for voter mobilization and to create backup plans for continuing effects from the COVID-19 pandemic.

It should be noted that this leadership group continues to evolve. While some participants remain constant by virtue of their role on campus, the student members change from one election cycle to the next. The student organizations recruit first year students for membership and involvement, and centers like the Norman Miller Center and Multicultural Student Services regularly hire student workers from each class in order to maintain continuity of leadership. New faculty collaborators are brought into the group through the Norman Miller Center Affiliate

Faculty Program (both Bauer and Saavedra Cisneros were participants last year) and through the Academic Service Learning Community Engaged Fellows program.

Campus Commitment

St. Norbert College was recently re-certified with the Carnegie Community Engagement Classification. Civic engagement is an institutional priority as seen in the campus strategic plan and in specific instruction from the Board of Trustees to encourage and facilitate student voting. Reports from our NSLVE data are circulated to the President's Cabinet and to select members of the board. A report was also published for interested community members by the Coalition of Voting Organizations of Brown County (COVO).

Our recently approved campus-wide learning outcomes include several elements relevant to civic engagement and voting (emphasis added):

BEHAVE ETHICALLY

Including but not limited to identifying, reflecting upon and articulating one's own principled values; **understanding and applying ethical principles in academic, civic and personal contexts**; weighing the ethical consequences of alternative courses of action; advocating for ethical outcomes.

INTERACT RESPECTFULLY

Including but not limited to collaborating effectively with people from a variety of backgrounds; reflecting critically on cultural biases, including one's own; valuing the differences, commonalities and contributions of cultures and societies throughout time; **engaging conscientiously in personal and civic life.**

SERVE RESPONSIBLY

Including but not limited to valuing the inherent dignity of all people; **advocating for and building systems that promote justice and the common good; making decisions and acting in ways that reflect awareness of global interconnectedness**; practicing stewardship and the responsible use of resources.

Landscape

Campus Overview and Demographics

A Catholic liberal arts college in the upper midwest, St. Norbert College has 2081 students, close to 90% of whom live on campus. This year's students come from 25 states, but most from Wisconsin, Illinois, Minnesota, and Michigan. Approximately 13% of students identify as persons of color. 43% identify as male, and 57% female.

Voting Rates in Recent Elections

2012 v. 2016

We started collecting data on student voter registration and voter turnout through the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) in 2012. Our student voting rate in that

election was 58.6%, 11 points higher than the national average. In 2016, another presidential contest, it was 50.6%. That was a significant decline from 2012. While many would point to depressed voter turnout nationwide, our student election turnout was only .2% higher than the national average—again, a significant decline from 2012. Note: out of concern for student privacy, the college administration chose NOT to allow student demographic data to be tied to our NSLVE report. As a result, we cannot break down the voting data by demographic categories.

2014 v. 2018

In the 2014 midterm election, our student voting rate was 32.7%. The number is low, but it was still 13 points higher than the national average for college students. After a strong push for voter registration and mobilization in 2018, the numbers jumped dramatically. Our voting rate of 47.3% was an improvement of 14.6 percentage points from the 2014 midterms. 1490 students (70.7% of the student body) had registered, an increase of 231 from four years earlier. This is all very good news.

However, the data also suggests a note of caution. Our 2018 turnout was 8 points over the national average—a decline from 2014. That can likely be attributed to increased student engagement nationwide, but it does suggest caution. We should not claim too much credit for the increase in voting on our own campus.

2018 Summary

Our collaboration with COVO was at the heart of our 2018 efforts. Their volunteers came to campus for a voter registration drive and registered students during our first year Gateway Seminar. Kevin Welch, our dedicated COVO volunteer, met repeatedly with our student staff and volunteers to strategize about voter education efforts and Election Day programming. We also collaborated with Campus Election Engagement Project (CEEP) through Wisconsin Campus Compact (WiCC); Yalla Vote, through the Arab American Institute; the ALL In Campus Democracy Challenge (including the Higher Education - Service Learning forum); Vote Together; Get Out the Vote (GOTV); NextGen; Young Invincibles (with Students Learn Students Vote), the City Clerk of De Pere, and Wisconsin Conservation Voters. On campus, we worked with nearly a dozen offices and student organizations to offer voter education programs (non-partisan presentations about the voting process, the function of various elected offices, and what was on the ballot), distributed information about voting using both print and social media, and ran a shuttle to the polls on Election Day. We distributed pizza, cookies, hot chocolate and voting information throughout the day on Election Day, and we shuttled more students to the polls than in any of the previous three national elections. Several of our students were interviewed on the local television news.

Goals for 2020

1. Each SNC student will be asked to register (if eligible), and at least 75% of students will be registered to vote.
2. Each SNC student will be encouraged to vote (if eligible) and at least 65% of students will vote.
3. Student staff will launch a program encouraging the education, registration, and mobilization of newly eligible voters in diverse communities in Brown County. They will reach at least 500 personal contacts and 5000 social media engagements.

Strategies for 2020

1. **Vote on campus.** In January 2020, the De Pere Common Council approved our proposal to designate the Norman Miller Center as an official polling place for in-person absentee voting. De Pere residents, including all SNC students living on campus, can register to vote and cast an absentee ballot at any time during regular business hours in the Norman Miller Center for the two weeks prior to the election. This designation will give us multiple opportunities both to encourage and to track student voting. It will allow a progressive “contest” between residence halls and will take pressure off the local polling place on Election Day. Further, it will extend these benefits beyond the campus as early voting will also be available to the community.

Pandemic contingency: We intended to use the April 20 election as a trial run for this strategy, but the COVID-19 pandemic forced the campus to close, and we were not able to offer voting on site. Wisconsin notoriously opened very few polling places for that election, resulting in long lines and increased community spread of the virus.

Recognizing the possibility of a resurgent pandemic in the fall, we will encourage students to register to vote in their home districts and to request absentee ballots there. If they end up at home, they will be able to vote in person or by mail. If they are on campus, they will have multiple options for voting in person or by mail.

2. **Cooperate with Residence Life to promote voter registration, education, and voting in the residence halls.** We are a residential campus, with almost 90% of students living on campus. This year we hope to take advantage of that by promoting voter registration and participation through the residence halls. Student RA's will lead a “contest” between halls for percent participation in voter registration and voting. Participation in early voting will allow us to track this over time rather than restrict it to a single day. The winning residence hall will enjoy an ice cream social with the college president.

Pandemic contingency: If students are not on campus in the fall, the staff of Residential Education and Housing will still be working to promote connections between the students assigned to various residence halls. A different version of the registration/voting contest will be devised in collaboration with RAs and REH staff.

3. **Voter registration efforts will continue through COVO volunteers and students who will be trained to work with them.** Students from Dr. Saavedra Cisneros' political science classes will be trained to support voter registration efforts. In addition, newly hired student staff will be trained to mobilize first time voters in the community.

Pandemic contingency: Not required.

4. **Campus Card Services will again produce alternative photo IDs suitable for voting.** These alternative IDs (approved initially by the Government Accountability Board [now Wisconsin Elections Commission] and thereafter by the City Clerk of De Pere) will be available at any time during regular business hours. New this year: out of state students will be sent a direct email describing Wisconsin's photo ID law. Campus Card Services will provide alternative photo IDs for those who need them as part of their arrival packets.

Pandemic contingency: Not required. If students have requested absentee ballots or are voting in their home districts, the photo identification problems will have been largely resolved.

5. **Student volunteers will be trained to work in the polling places for early voting and on Election Day.** Students from Dr. Bauer's art class and Dr. Saavedra Cisneros' political science classes will be trained and assigned times to manage in-person absentee voting at the Norman Miller Center. They will also be encouraged to work for the City of De Pere at the local polling place on Election Day.

Pandemic contingency: To be determined by the professors of record.

6. **Student Community Organizers from the Norman Miller Center will lead several voter education programs:**
 - a. "What's on my ballot" for SNC students
 - b. 100th anniversary of women's suffrage celebration for students and community members
 - c. Civic education for primary school students and middle schoolers, with celebration of women's suffrage
 - d. Debate watching parties on campus

Pandemic contingency: These programs will go virtual if necessary.

7. **Student Community Organizers from the Norman Miller Center will drive a shuttle to the polls on Election Day.**

Pandemic contingency: If students are not on campus, the shuttle will be cancelled.

8. **Publicize voting efforts on campus.** In order to encourage every eligible student to register and vote, we will use email announcements, posters, social media, lunch line recruitment tables, and widely publicized co-curricular events.

Pandemic contingency: If students are not on campus, these efforts will all go virtual.

9. **Student Community Organizers will launch a program encouraging the education, registration, and mobilization of newly eligible voters in diverse communities in Brown County.** Three newly hired student workers will be assigned to reach out to newly eligible voters at Northeast Wisconsin Technical College, the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay, and St. Norbert College. Collaborating with COVO, other community partners, and representatives from those campuses, they will collectively reach at least 500 personal contacts and 5000 social media engagements.

Pandemic contingency: In the event that students are not on campus, the work of these community organizers will take place over the phone and social media. They will also work with COVO to host drive-through registration events in targeted communities.

10. **Update and expand web-based resources.** Working with Jill Olson, Program Coordinator at the Norman Miller Center, students from Dr. Saavedra Cisneros' political science classes will gather and produce additional resources for voter education, to be shared on the NMC web page (e.g., sample ballots, explanations of various elected offices, candidate guides). All resources will be translated into Spanish and, where possible Somali and other important languages for our region.

Pandemic contingency: Not required.

Assessment and Reporting

As always, data from our national NSLVE report will help us realize whether we attain our goals of increased student participation. We will also have more immediate numbers available for the residence halls participating in our voter turnout contest. NSLVE reports will be shared with the administration and collaborative partners (on and off campus), and a summary will be published on the Norman Miller Center Facebook page.

Goals Beyond 2020

1. Increase voter registration and turnout in each 4 year election cycle.
2. Earn and maintain a "Platinum" rating with the All In Democracy Challenge.
3. Earn such a strong reputation for civic engagement that political candidates and elected officials will increasingly visit the campus to meet with students.
4. See the voting turnout for Brown County consistently increase, particularly among newly eligible voters.