



**Democratic Engagement Action Plan
CY 2022-2023**

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Executive Summary

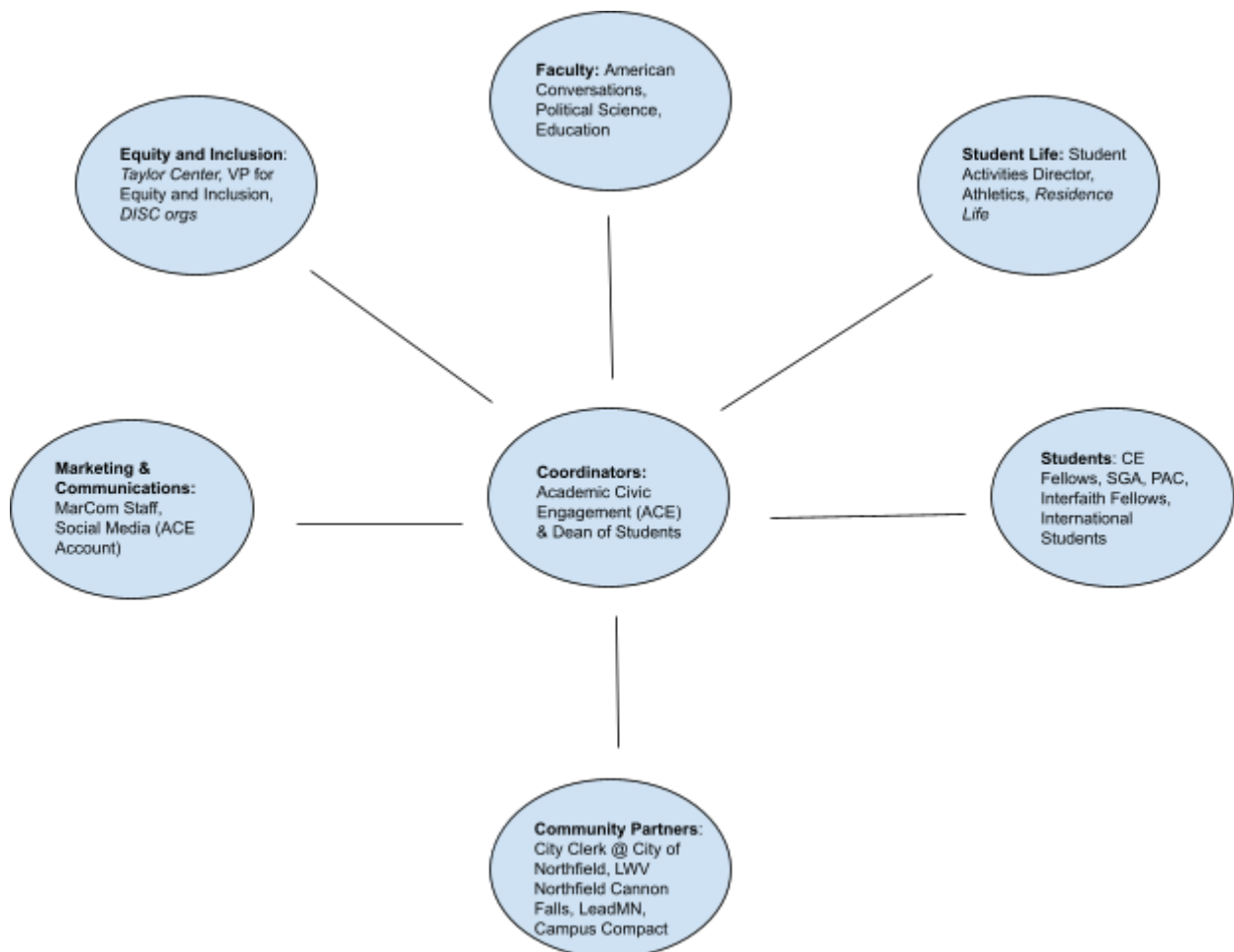
The St. Olaf College Democratic Engagement Plan was first drafted by Alyssa Melby (Program Director, Academic Civic Engagement), India Bock '23 (Civic Engagement Fellow), and Grace Barton '25 (Student Government Association First-Year Senator) in Spring 2022 on behalf of the cross-campus Election Engagement Group, comprised of students, faculty, and staff, who will also take responsibility for implementation. The group is co-led by Alyssa Melby (Academic Division) and Roz Eaton (Dean of the Students, Student Life Division). Feedback from the Election Engagement group was incorporated in May 2022, and the plan may be further revised as needed after feedback is received from the [ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge](#). We will again revisit the plan in Summer 2023 to transition over to a 2024-25 action plan.

This action plan intends to comprehensively demonstrate existing and future actions, commitments, and priorities around democratic and civic engagement at the St. Olaf College campus in the 2022 and 2023 calendar years using the [Strengthening American Democracy Guide](#). This action plan hopes to continue to build on the stellar foundation of voting engagement within our community and establish more year-round civic education and engagement activities. The activities within the action plan take myriad forms (virtual, hybrid, and in-person) as we attend to considerations from the ongoing pandemic, accessibility, and meeting students where they are at (which is often in digital spaces). In surveying current civic engagement work to create this action plan, the process has illuminated areas for future collaborations and deeper integration of civic engagement mechanisms within pre-existing college structures, such as those proposed by the "[Ask Every Student](#)" framework.

Leadership

The Election Engagement Group started informally in 2019, primarily to coordinate logistics of the campus serving as a polling location. However, the group quickly morphed into a larger effort to consider student education and sustained conversation around civic engagement through the election and beyond.

The core group has included staff and faculty representatives from the academic civic engagement office, student activities, Deans of Students, Political Science and Education departments, athletics, and marketing. This spring, we added student representatives from the academic civic engagement office, the student government association, athletics, the Interfaith Fellow student organization, the Political Awareness Committee, and the major partisan student groups (College Dems and College Republicans). While we don't have a rep from our local elections office (City Clerk of Northfield) in our group, a group member is designated as a liaison with them, and they are in regular communication with them in the lead up to Election Day. Furthermore, Melby serves as the St. Olaf College liaison on the board of the local League of Women Voters-Northfield and Cannon Falls. This liaison role allows for regular communication and coordination of activities between the LWV and the campus community. A diagram of the group's composition by department/role is listed below, adapted from Inver Hills Community College shared at a LeadMN workshop. Roles in itali are roles that are currently empty on the Election Engagement Group.



The vast reach of our working group members (8-10 regularly in attendance at meetings) within different divisions of the college allows for ongoing communication and engagement with a broader array of faculty, staff, and students. A major responsibility of all group members is liaising with others to invite them into the work. Further, our ability to have someone from our Marketing and Communications department allows us to consider messaging as it relates to larger college goals, branding, and social media efforts. Students also provide invaluable insight into relevant messaging and events that would appeal to their peers. As the group continues to coalesce, we anticipate breaking into working groups around the strategy areas listed below. The group will meet monthly throughout the spring 2022, bi-weekly during the summer 2022, and weekly the fall 2022. Monthly meetings will resume in January 2023 and continue throughout the calendar year. Meetings are established via Google Calendar events that state the location (virtual or in person) of the meeting.

There are stakeholders who are not currently involved that we have identified. In addition to the recent onboarding of student leaders from across the campus, the group is also actively working to recruit leaders from our DISC (Diversity Initiatives Support Committee) student organizations to continue to encourage and support affinity group GOTV efforts through an equity and justice lens. Residence Life has been involved in the past, but is not currently due to staff turnover. Residence life will be a vital partner for moving forward the Ask Every Student mechanisms and implementing voter registration within our existing operations. We will reach out to the Registrar's Office and applicable IT systems staff to inquire about incorporating registration and important election-related information into our student information system and learning management software.

The group is currently co-led by Alyssa Melby (Program Director, Academic Civic Engagement) and Roz Eaton (Dean of the Students). They report to the Provost and Dean of the College (academic) and the VP for Student Life, respectively. The Provost, in particular, requests frequent updates on election-related activities in the six months leading up to the election. We anticipate that our Provost and President will continue to share information as necessary to the campus community.

Participation in the Election Engagement group in non-election years has admittedly been a challenge. To help sustain momentum, we will shift a paid Civic Engagement Fellow student employment role in the upcoming academic year to specifically work on mobilizing students and to coordinate non-partisan, civic engagement activities for students in the "off" times (Jan-May 2023 and beyond).

If someone in the working group stops showing up and doing the work or needs to step away, we will first inquire of the person about their ability to continue, at what level they can commit to, and additional support we can offer. If unable to continue, we would then reach out to administrators in their division or organization and asking for other names of individuals who could step and carry the work forward.

Commitment

The St. Olaf College [mission statement](#) reads: “St. Olaf College challenges students to excel in the liberal arts, examine faith and values, and explore meaningful vocation in an inclusive, globally engaged community nourished by Lutheran tradition.” Our mission in practice statements expound on our mission where we work to “direct our skills and knowledge toward the good” and help students “help students envision their futures and develop their talents to address the needs of their many communities.” The concept of [meaningful vocation](#) underscores a key value at St. Olaf College, where vocation is understood as “Life on Purpose. For the Common Good.” Civic learning and democratic engagement are then embedded within the idea of vocation and being involved in a “globally engaged community.”

Commitment to civic learning and democratic engagement are present in several aspects of our college-wide STO Goals, namely the [responsible interpersonal, civic, and global engagement](#) goal, whereby “students will develop knowledge, skills, and commitments for enhancing the well-being of peers, families, and communities” to, for instance, “participate responsibly and knowledgeably in public life.”

There is no explicit mention of civic learning and democratic engagement in the [current strategic plan](#) or in the [Plan for Equity and Inclusion \(2019\)](#); however, aspects of civic learning and engagement can be found embedded within or could arise from various other goals, programs, and initiatives, including but not limited to Academic Civic Engagement (ACE) courses and attention to community inclusivity and differing political perspectives.

The general education curriculum at St. Olaf College, called the Ole Core Curriculum, was recently revised and began its inaugural year of implementation in 2021-22. While no Core attribute names civic learning and democratic engagement, there are multiple opportunities within the learning outcomes of various Core attributes where civic learning and skill development can occur and be woven into the curriculum, including:

- [First-year seminar](#), where students are “engaging with difference and different points of view,” “learning how to have difficult conversations,” and reflecting on “living in community.”
- [Power and Race](#), which has a specific focus on contemporary U.S. society where students should “demonstrate an ability to recognize and respond to different approaches to understanding cultures, as insiders or outsiders, which developing a sense of respect and humility,” and “practice skills and habits necessary for critical self-reflection and conversation, such as respect, recognition, courage, and cultural humility.”
- [Social Science](#), where students will “analyze social systems and human behavior within those systems.”
- [Ole Experience in Practice](#), where students will “evaluate skills and roles, including those that help them contribute to the community.”

Institutionally, St. Olaf College also belongs to several national organizations and coalitions who actively support civic and democratic engagement, including but not limited to [Campus Compact](#), [AAC&U](#) (and their new initiative, [Civic Learning and Democracy Engagement](#)), and [NASPA](#). We have and will continue to avail ourselves of resources and support from these groups as we implement this engagement plan.

How can we assess the efficacy of these commitments? Given the newness of the general education curriculum, no data is available yet, but an assessment schedule is being developed. A self-reported survey around perceptions of and growth in STO Goals, however, is administered to incoming first-year students prior to the start of classes, and to the same group of first-years and to graduating seniors in the spring semester. On the [most recent survey of seniors in Spring 2019](#), only 7% of respondents thought they had grown the most in “responsible interpersonal, civic, and global engagement,” and the subcategories within this goal were some of the lowest ranking in terms of the extent to which their St. Olaf experiences helped develop skills for responsible interpersonal, civic, and global engagement. All other subcategories in the survey except one scored above 70% in “very much + quite a bit” responses. The responses from this one survey invite us to consider ways in which experiences at St. Olaf can be better framed and explicitly linked to this goal.

Landscape

Nearly all 3,000 St. Olaf students are full-time, “traditional age” college students (ages 18-22). As of 2021, 22.1% of students at St. Olaf were students of color and 67.1% were white. 10.2% were international students. Of domestic students, 43.3% are from Minnesota. This geographic diversity leads to several considerations. First, with such a large international population, our engagement plan must include creative strategies to include students who are unable to vote. Strategies must inform students of the myriad of ways they can meaningfully participate and become stakeholders in our democratic process without voting. Second, as over half of the eligible students are from outside of Minnesota, our voting plan must include providing resources and support for students to decide between voting in Minnesota and voting in their home state.

For those who do choose to vote in Minnesota, however, many external factors make it easier for our students to access the ballot. Individuals must have resided in Minnesota for 20 days prior to the election (although they are allowed to register before the 20 day period has been met) and must also register to vote at least 21 days before Election Day or on Election Day at a polling place. Thus students are encouraged to register to vote as soon as they arrive on campus! One of our most useful resources is having a polling station on campus combined with having a fairly small and residential campus. This results in the vast majority of students passing by the polling station as they go about their day on election day, significantly reducing

the cost voters face of figuring out where and when to vote. Lines can be long, however, so in conjunction with offering the on-campus polling location, efforts also involve encouraging students to vote early as they are able. For early voting students must go to city hall which is a few miles away. Many students do not have their own modes of transportation, although there are a few public transportation options that students can utilize. There may be opportunities to consider incentivizing early voting to reduce wait times on Election Day.

Many internal factors (in addition to the activities listed within the Commitment section) also make it easier from many different parts of the college who support election and democratic engagement efforts. Civic learning and democratic engagement is woven throughout many general education courses, but is most present in the work of:

- the [American Conversations program](#), a first- and second-year learning community for approximately 40 students in each cohort where, among other things, students examine facets of American history, culture, and “the meaning of citizenship, both in the classroom and the surrounding community.”
- the [Public Affairs Conversation program](#), a one-year, two course sequence plus funded internship opportunity for sophomores, juniors, and seniors to pursue an interdisciplinary perspective on American public policy.
- the [Political Science department](#) which develops “the capacity to be knowledgeable, thoughtful, and effective citizens” to over 100 majors each year. The Political Science major requires at least one course in the subfield of “American Politics and Public Policy.” All of the 100 and 200 level courses in this subfield are open to both majors and nonmajors. Two of these courses, “Political Parties and Elections” and “The New Hampshire Primary and U.S. Presidential Politics” off-campus program, regularly have an Academic Civic Engagement component within the greater community.

In the co-curriculum, St. Olaf maintains a robust Student Government Association that includes 150 students from all four years and with differing perspectives to make decisions and advocate for students on campus. Political Awareness Committee (PAC) and several nonpartisan and partisan political student organizations, including College Democrats, College Republicans, and Women in Law and Politics, that provide speakers, events, and other educational opportunities for their peers throughout the year.

Athletics has played an important role in encouraging voter engagement and participation both on and off campus at St. Olaf. In the 2022 election Ole student athletes were able to reach 100% voter registration. Student athletes built excitement within the department and on campus using social media challenges, content and displays of pride. Student athletes worked polling events and wore “All Oles Vote” shirts on election day as leaders on campus. The department and coaches have also played an important role in supporting student athletes voting, taking the day off all mandatory athletic activity.

Additionally, St. Olaf has represented well in the MIAC Conference. St. Olaf led the conference in student athletes registration and voting numbers along with coaches leading the conference in their pledge of the “All- MIAC Votes Initiative” in 2021 and we are currently leading in 2022.

Another avenue for both curricular and co-curricular civic learning occurs through the work of St. Olaf's [Institute for Freedom and Community](#). The Institute maintains as part of its mission to "cultivate civil discourse with a liberal arts setting," and does so through inviting nationally and internationally renowned speakers to share their ideas with the campus community, faculty seminars, and support of the [Public Affairs Conversation program](#).

Despite these areas of strength, a few internal barriers have been noted from previous democratic engagement efforts. This support has not always reached the administrative areas of the institution as fully as is desired. This shows up in that the election engagement group does not receive any funding and relies fully on funds provided through the Academic Civic Engagement budget and other areas of the college. Furthermore, student leaders have shared that they've encountered a growing disillusionment with democratic engagement, particularly in recognition of the historical harms and injustices that have been committed by the same democratic government we're inviting them to participate in. Students are strategizing about messaging to invite further conversation around this reality and lived experience of their peers.

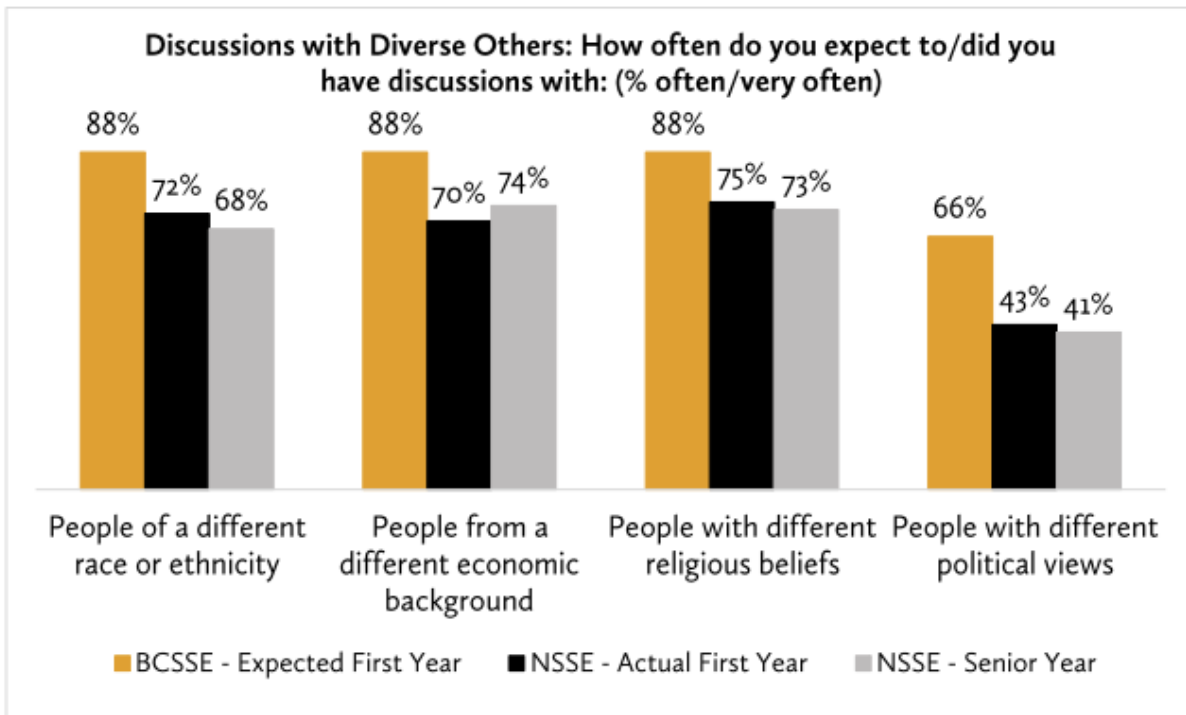
The college's encouragement to participate in civic engagement and the democratic process as seen in the commitment statements and its activities invites students to develop civic habits and see this as one of many roles that constitutes their own sense of vocation. A [2021 Higher Education Data Sharing \(HEDS\) Alumni Survey data](#) illustrates that 88% of our alumni say that St. Olaf helped prepare them for "social and civic involvement." Invitation, however, does not always equate to development as another data point conflicts with the HEDS Alumni Survey. When Seniors on the [National Survey of Student Engagement \(NSSE\)](#) were asked, "How much has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development" in "being an informed and active citizen", they scored significantly lower than all the other comparison groups. Furthermore, the college has room to grow in fostering a more inclusive political climate on campus. In a [report to the Board of Regents](#) in Fall 2021 that reported on the most recent data from the Beginning College Survey of Student Engagement (BCSSE), (NSSE), Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE), and HEDS Alumni Survey, found the following:

- There was generally a less supportive environment for those of different political affiliations than those of different sexual orientations, gender identities, and religious affiliations (2).
- Incoming first-year respondents expected more frequent discussions with students who differed from them (in racial/ethnic background, economic background, or religious or political beliefs) than they actually experienced during their first year. Senior respondents at St. Olaf, as [compared to respondents at other institutions](#), were also less likely to engage with people with different political views as the graphic below indicates. This data is similar to previous administrations of these surveys.






Experiences With Diversity and Inclusion

NSSE Engagement Indicators

The NSSE Discussions with Diverse Others Engagement Indicator (EI) asked students about their interactions with people of different races/ethnicities, economic backgrounds, and those who hold different religious beliefs or political views.



The State of Voting: St. Olaf 2020 Election Results

1		Registered Voters	93.9% of eligible voters were registered to vote!
2		Voter Turnout	87.6% of eligible voters voted!
3		Racial Discrepancies	89% of eligible white students voted, while 81% of Black students, 82% of Asian students, 77% Hispanic students, 56% of multi-racial students voted
4		Registration Improvement	3% increase in voter registration
5		Voting Improvement	6% increase in voter turnout

St. Olaf won the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge’s award for highest voter turnout in the country in 2020 and, as the graphic above indicates, made progress in increasing voter turnout from 2016. The question becomes: how can we keep this momentum going, address our gaps, and translate these successes to a midterm election?

The first consideration that needs to be kept in mind from our historical National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) data is that the difference between registration rate and voting rate during midterm elections is much larger than during major election years.

Voting Rate from last Midterm Election (2018): 70.8%
 Registration Rate from last Midterm Election (2018): 89.9%

In 2016 the registration rate was very similar to 2018, at 90.2% but the voting rate was 81.7%. There is a similar trend for 2020. *How can we close this gap between registration and turnout for all students in the midterms?*

The second consideration our data illuminates is a discrepancy between voting rates for white students and voting rate for students of color. White students voted at 89% while Black students voted at 81% and Hispanic students voted at 77% in 2020. This difference was much larger in the last midterm election with black students voting at 48%, hispanic students voting at 53%, and white students voting at 74%. *How can we begin to close this gap, too?*

The third consideration, not listed above in the graphic but present in our NSLVE data from 2020, is that first year students voted the most. 22-24 year olds voted at a much lower percentage (61%) than 18-21 year olds (81%). This may be because 1) the vast majority of our students who live off campus (~300) are within this older age bracket, meaning that if they choose to vote in Northfield, they cannot vote on-campus and must vote at another polling location in Northfield. 2) Nearly half of the Election Ambassadors came from the American Conversations program which is designed for first- and second-year students, and their networks are likely to more reflect their class year. *How can we do a better job of engaging older students?*

Goals

The Election Engagement Group identified the following long-term goals:

- By 2024, fully integrate voting registration into class registration and new student orientation at the beginning of the year using the Ask Every Student framework
- By 2024, register 95% of eligible students
- By 2024, have at least four additional academic departments or programs outside of Political Science, American Conversations, and the Public Affairs Conversation program committed to election and democratic engagement work
- By 2028, fully close the gap between the voting rate of white and BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) eligible students
- By 2028, identify opportunities in campus planning, learning outcomes, and funding for explicit addressing civic learning and democratic engagement

The Election Engagement Group identified the following short-term goals:

What Needs to be Improved in 2022?



Bridge the Gaps: White and BIPOC Students, Registered Voters and Turnout



Increased Opportunities for Engagement with International & Non-US Citizen Students



Increased Education Surrounding Election Day



Expansion of the P2P Network to Include People Outside of Immediate Friend Groups

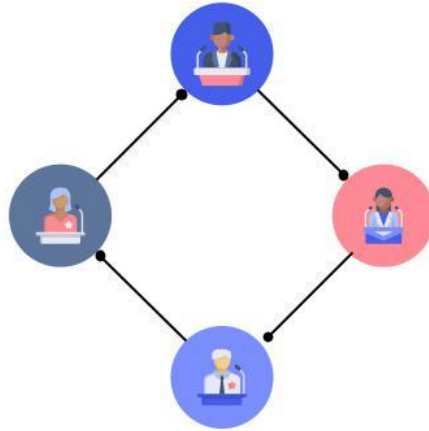
Campus Goals

Better Incorporate Efforts Into Class/Academics

Target class raps in programs and departments with high percentage of BIPOC students

Close the Gap Between White and BIPOC Students

89% of White students voted on election day compared to 81% of Black students, 77% of Hispanic students, 82% of Asian students, and 56% of mixed-race students



Better Include International Students into Election Engagement

Offer opportunities for International students to vote by mail in their home countries. Recognize different electoral systems and support international students financially in their voting efforts

Better Information

Help educate off-campus students about their polling location, poll wait times, and national databases.

The ultimate outcome of these goals is to have the following:

- register 91% of eligible students,
- have a voting rate of registered students of 80%
- have an overall voting rate of eligible students of 75% during the 2020 midterm elections.
- Close the voting rate gap between white and BIPOC students to within 8 percentage points for all disaggregated racial groups

Strategy

We commit to a variety of diverse strategies involving many different groups, organizations, and individuals on campus in order to fully involve the entire student body in our democratic engagement efforts. The strategies will be largely implemented by various members of the Election Engagement Group.

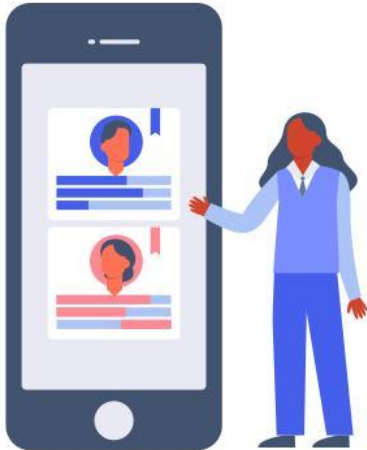
Core Strategy: VOTE website and Election Ambassador program

The crux of our strategy plan will center on 1) utilizing the [VOTE website](#) as a central hub for information on all things election and democratic engagement and 2) implementing the successful peer-to-peer Election Ambassador program that invites eligible students to complete a voting plan and pledge. We have hired two students to lead this work this fall with support from the Academic Civic Engagement office, known collectively in this document as the civic engagement (CE) Fellows; the CE Fellows also serve on the Election Engagement Group. The CE Fellows are making concerted outreach and engagement efforts with other student leaders from underrepresented groups to invite them into this work.

The CE Fellows will conduct training in-person and virtual (if needed) sessions with Election Ambassadors utilizing our framework from 2020 to discuss how to contact students in a nonpartisan way, inform them on the basics of voting (students can choose where--home or school, types, location, sample ballot), and walk through the "Pledge to Vote" google form. The training will also review expectations for follow-up between the ambassadors and their pledges on important dates, such as "Vote Early Day" and Election Day (if they have not already indicated that they voted absentee or early).

One way the CE Fellows hope to heighten the excitement for the ambassadors is to create a structured incentive program:

Peer to Peer Mobilization



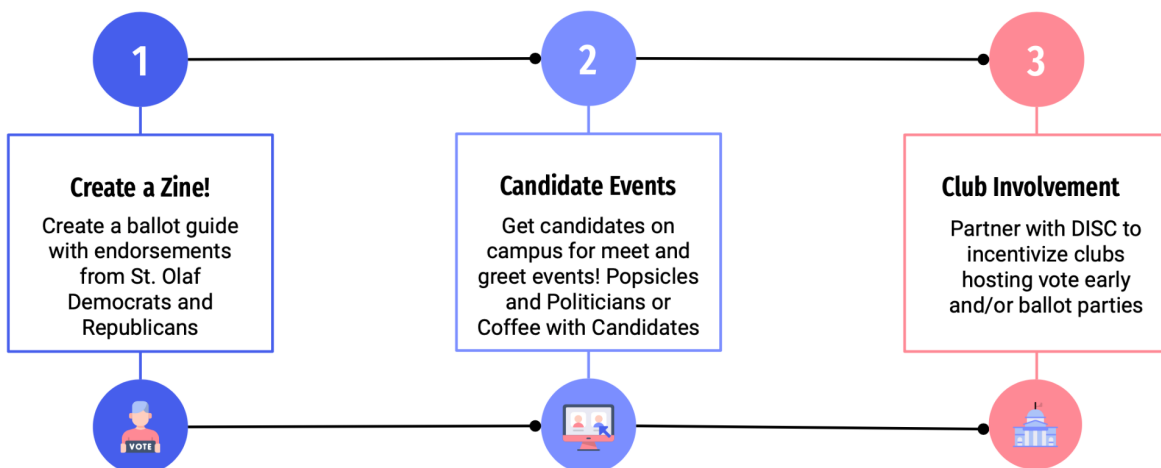
Let's incentivize these student leaders!

- Create an incentive system where students are rewarded for the amount of students they get to pledge to vote
- We plan to crowdsource prizes that students are interested in but as an example...
 - 10 Students = Water Bottle
 - 20 Students = Tote Bag
 - 30 Students = Target Gift Card
- Overall prize for the most amount of students registered! iPad or Fancy Headphones

Election ambassadors will not only be encouraged to look within their current networks but encouraged to look just beyond their immediate spheres in an effort to broaden their reach. The Election Ambassador student leaders will also brainstorm creative outreach strategies, such as emailing everyone in the directory with the same first name (a successful strategy that was used in 2020 by one student!).

Strategies to Close Gaps Between Student Voter Turnout by Demographics

How do we Close the Gap Between Registration and Voting?



These three strategies address goals for bridging two gaps in voter turnout: 1) between students of color and white students, and 2) between students who are registered but do not vote and those who do turn out to vote. These three strategies also work at another goal of providing greater education for all students.

The Zine ballot guide will require the collaboration of the two primary political student organizations, the St. Olaf College Democrats and the St. Olaf College Republicans, and be spearheaded by the CE Fellows. The Zine will live on the VOTE website and, as funds permit, be printed and distributed on campus. It will provide general information on where candidates stand on issues, as well as information on making the decision of where to vote- home or Northfield?-and information on timeline of the election season, and logistics for voting. To be as inclusive as possible the Zine's messaging will be informed by the [Intentional Voter Engagement Messaging while Addressing Systemic Racism](#) guide.

The candidate events provide more informal opportunities for meeting and learning more about candidates. While the College Democrats and the College Republicans will likely do some of their own partisan campaigning on campus, these meet and greets would be nonpartisan in their invitation to and inclusion of all candidates for particular races. The ACE office and CE Fellows will especially strive to have at least two candidate events for local offices to encourage students to learn more about the "down ballot" voting options.

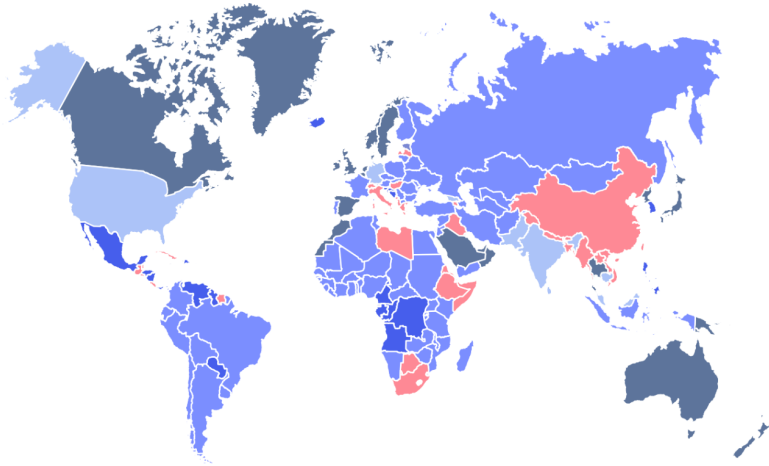
CE Fellows and other student leaders on the Election Engagement Group will closely work with our DISC (Diversity Initiatives Support Committee) student organizations on increasing club involvement. First, they will learn what may already be happening in DISC organizations around voter, election, and democratic engagement efforts. Second, they will work with DISC organization leaders to tailor information and events to the specifics of their organization, possibly to include ballot mailing parties, vote early parties, and more.

Civic Engagement for International Students

Around 10% of our students are international students. In 2022 we are focusing on ways to make international and non-documented students feel empowered and engaged in civic engagement on campus.

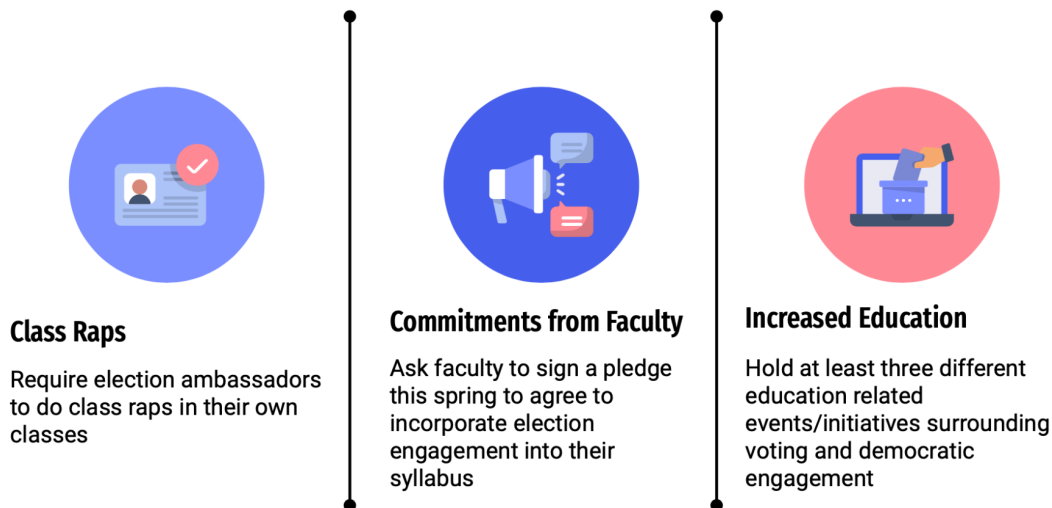
International Students Civic Engagement Week

- Host a roundtable discussion where international students share their political experience from their own country with peers
- Create a display and resources for international students can learn about absentee voting in their country
- Create a fund dedicated to costs associated with voting absentee for International students



The CE Fellows and Election Engagement Group members will work together with staff from the Taylor Center for Equity and Inclusion on programming for the International Students Civic Education week as well as leaders from the international student organization groups.

Civic Engagement in the Classroom



Over the summer, the ACE office will create modules in Moodle for faculty to use, as well as update information on the VOTE website that faculty can easily plug into their syllabi and/or coursework.

In early August, the faculty representatives on the Election Engagement Group will send out an email asking faculty to commit to any number of actions in and through their classes to promote election engagement, including but not limited to:

- Discussing the “nuts and bolts” of voting with their class
- Discussing the election and/or public policy in general and how it intersects with topic(s) in the course
- Hosting a class rap (5-min. Student presentation on election and voting 101)
- Including important election related dates in syllabi and/or Moodle
- Including a link to the St. Olaf VOTE website and/or the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge Platinum Ribbon in their email signature
- Incorporating Moodle modules on voting and elections into their course
- Giving extra credit for attendance at any election education event
- Allow students to vote during class hours if they have no other time to do so
- Other [Faculty can submit their own ideas]

We see this faculty pledge as paralleling the pledge that we are asking students to make

when they complete the pledge to vote form.

An additional task of the Election Ambassadors this year is to do at least one “class rap” in a course in the fall 2022. The class rap is a model from LeadMN for a brief but quick 5 minute overview of how to register to vote, how to find out your options for voting (home or school, absentee or in-person), and to encourage their fellow students to pledge to vote using their form (and increase the number of pledges they get for the incentive program). The ACE office will provide Election Ambassadors with a template for asking their faculty for 5 minutes of class time, as well as a script for the class rap. Election Ambassadors will also be highly encouraged to consider doing their class rap in a department or program with a high percentage of BIPOC students, such as Race, Ethnic, Gender, and Sexuality Studies; Social Work, and Sociology/Anthropology. The Election Engagement group anticipates asking faculty in those department specifically for time for class raps as part of the effort to help close the gap between white and BIPOC students.

Lastly, the CE Fellows and the ACE office will commit to hosting at least three campus-wide educational events or initiatives around voting (its importance, the process, restrictions, etc.) in addition to those listed above. A few events that are already in the planning process include:

- Constitution Day (Sept. 17) lecture with Nick Buccola
- National Voter Registration Day (Sept. 20) tabling
- Lecture with Eboo Patel on his new book, *We Need to Build: Field Notes for a Diverse Democracy*, on Sept. 28-29
- League of Women Voters Northfield and Cannon Falls Candidate Forums (date early October; streamed from Northfield City Hall)

Other Strategies

The St. Olaf Athletics is a leader in our conference and in the nation for their dedication to civic engagement. As in 2020, they will again be canceling athletics practices to ensure that students have time to vote and also help volunteer to staff entrances to the polling location to watch for political insignia ([MN State Statute 211B](#)). The MIAC is a national leader in the “All-IN” Initiative, setting a standard for other institutions in the realm of athlete involvement and the number of coaches who pledge their commitment. The college president has also voiced his support for the work that athletics does around election engagement

The ACE office will work with Res Life over the summer and into the fall to send targeted email communications to students living off-campus about where to find information about their polling location in Northfield. As in 2020, the ACE office will also work with International and Off-Campus Studies to send two targeted emails to students studying abroad/away to inform them of key election information.

CE fellows, along with Election Ambassadors, will table during the yearly campus fair in mid-September to answer questions, register voters, and engage students on issues on the ballot and their voting plan. A few other strategies that the CE Fellows are exploring include:

- Host debate watch parties in collaboration with Democrat and Republican student organization
- Organize early voting shuttles and specific early voting events
- Sponsor an art contest for artists at Olaf to design poster encouraging students to vote

Our short term goals are largely predicated on our long term goals and how we can make progress towards achieving those goals. In 2022 we will begin having conversations about an annual mechanism that encourages voter registration for every student. One of our largest focuses as students first arrive is on Residence Life. Our goal is to have Residence Life staff and Resident Assistants (RAs) be trained in Voter Registration and be prepared to answer questions about how voting works in Minnesota. As students sign in to their rooms they will be presented with a packet of information regarding voting. Students will also be given information about ways to engage if they are unable to vote, engaging every student in the electoral process regardless of citizenship status is an important goal for this election cycle. In addition, the CE Fellows will work on updating bulletin displays for the residence halls and ask staff to dedicate a board with election information during Fall 2022. Another option for asking every first year student would be to incorporate voter registration into the SOAR (St. Olaf Orientation to Academics and Resources) each fall. Because the SOAR program is a part of the new general education curriculum, the ACE office will begin conversations with SOAR leaders to talk about being ready to implement this for the 2024 election.

Post-Election Engagement Strategies

The aforementioned strategies all deal largely with the run-up to Election Day 2022, but we know that democratic engagement needs to happen all year round! In the post-election phase and through the remainder of calendar year 2023, we commit to the following:

- Monthly meetings of the Election Engagement Group
- Comparing data from MN voters and PTV forms
- Continued dialogue with, support, and collaboration of the various nonpartisan programs and activities of the Political Awareness Committee, including their PAC Cafe weekly dialogues
- At least one educational event each term (guest speakers, panel discussions,
- Working with the new St. Olaf President (anticipated start date: June 2023) and leadership team in the 2023 to onboard them to our work and commitment to democratic and civic engagement
- Mobilizing and encouraging more active lobbying and observation of civic processes, including but not limited to:
 - Lobby Days, such as the Minnesota Private Colleges Council and other affinity- and issue-based days at the MN Capitol

- Attending and observing local government meetings, such as Northfield City Council, the various boards and commissions with the City of Northfield, and the Rice County Commission
- Try and have voter registration during move-in day ready for September 2024

Reporting

The 2022-23 Democratic Engagement Plan and NSLVE results will be publicly accessible on the [VOTE website](#). We will share our plan with key stakeholders in the following ways:

- In the email asking faculty in August to pledge to election engagement activities. The link will also live within the pledge form.
- An update from the Student Life Committee chair at the first all-faculty meeting in late August/early September.
- An all staff email or an update at the first all-staff meeting of the year in September.
- At all Election Ambassador trainings in September and October.
- As a link in the students' "Pledge to Vote" form.
- Shared on the [ACE Instagram page](#)

Evaluation

Evaluating our previous election and democratic engagement related data provided an essential foundation for the creation of this current plan. A similar assessment and evaluation process will be critical in informing future work. The purpose of our evaluation efforts in 2022-23 will be to better understand the following questions:

1. How effective were the core strategies--the VOTE website and the Peer-to-Peer voter mobilization program--at increasing knowledge about the elections and democratic engagement, at increasing student voter turnout, and closing voter turnout gaps?
2. How effective were other strategies at increasing knowledge about the elections and democratic engagement and at increasing voter turnout, and closing voter turnout gaps?
3. How might these efforts impact the political climate at St. Olaf in two key indicators: a) Having discussions with people across different political viewpoints, and b) Contributing to knowledge, skills, and personal development in being an informed and active citizen?
4. How did faculty help support election and democratic engagement efforts in their classroom?

Evaluation efforts will take multiple forms and involve various leads involved in the Election Engagement Group and others.

1. We will continue to rely upon our colleagues in the [Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment](#) offices to send in our information to NSLVE and to administer the various surveys that touch upon political climate and democratic engagement, including BCSSE, NSSE, HEDS Alumni Survey, and the STO Goals survey, according to our assessment schedule. With results from these surveys, the Election Engagement group will continue to monitor quantitative data on aspects of questions #1-3 above. All of these institutional survey results will be shared publicly on the college's website.
2. Prof. Chris Chapp (Political Science) has again committed to in-depth analysis of our pledge to vote form data alongside MN voter roll information and NSLVE data (once available; estimated summer-fall 2023) to better understand if we are closing the gaps between White and BIPOC student voter turnout and the rate of registered but non-voting students and those who turn out to vote. This project may again include student researcher(s) in the implementation. Analysis of results from the 2020 election were shared at the May 2022 [Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Symposium](#) at St. Olaf College, and Prof. Chapp is planning on turning this research into an article in the near future to share with academic journals.
3. To address question #4, the ACE office sends out an end-of-year faculty survey of all ACE faculty. Next year in May 2023, it will include those who fill out the faculty pledge form to inquire what activities they ended up doing and any impacts they observed or noted from students.
4. A survey will be administered in early 2023 to the Election Ambassadors to assess the actions they undertook in the peer-to-peer mobilization process, the perceived impact of their actions, and their utilization of information and resources, such as the VOTE website.

5. When possible, brief post or post-then-pre surveys will be administered at the end of class raps, election education events, and Election Ambassador trainings as an indirect measure of growth in election-related knowledge to address questions #1-2. When possible, the ACE office will work with applicable faculty and students in relevant courses in the design, implementation, and analysis of these surveys.

The Election Engagement Group will analyze findings from the other above sources and be incorporated as reference points as they work on creating the next democratic engagement plan in Summer and Fall 2023. The group will reference the long- and short-term goals within this plan and evaluate what goals were met or improved.