



**Temple University Voter Friendly Campus  
Democratic Engagement Action Plan  
2022-2023**

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## Section I: Executive Summary

Temple University's Voter Friendly Democratic Engagement Action plan was developed through a retrospective and future-oriented process. Because our coalition has two full years of experience and newly acquired data from the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement, we have been able to assess the work done thus far and plan for future years to address shortcomings in data and evolving campus operations.

The mission of Temple Votes remains committed to our mission of providing comprehensive voter registration, education, and mobilization efforts at Temple University. It is a non-partisan initiative led by a committee of students, faculty, administrators, and voter education organizations. This report was written by Chris Carey, Senior Associate Dean of Students, following discussions with members of the coalition. While the membership of the coalition continues to evolve, it remains inclusive of faculty, students, administrators, and external partners. Additionally, while we do not bring in individuals from different campuses, Chris continues to share information that is discussed in the Pennsylvania Student Votes Coalition meetings and emails.

Temple University is based in North Central Philadelphia, but it has a global reach with eight urban and suburban campuses in and around Philadelphia and Pennsylvania as well as campuses in Tokyo and Rome. The primary membership and target audience of Temple Votes is Main Campus, but the compiled resources and information are accessible to all campuses. Specific attention is also given and provided to students who are studying at a campus different than their registration status (i.e. students studying abroad). We are also considering and adjusting our plans to the evolving opportunities for students to engage in remote and hybrid learning.

Two of the main tenets of Temple University's [mission](#) are to prepare students for active citizenship and to promote "service and engagement throughout Philadelphia, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the nation and the world." The mission of Temple Votes fits nicely into this larger mission. Being civically engaged is critical to active citizenship, and elections at every level help our students become engaged. When presenting, developing new partners, or seeking buy-in, Temple Votes intentionally references the larger mission so that all parties understand how our work is interwoven.

This action plan is intended to prepare for and address the November 2022 elections. Many of our goals will provide an outline of things we wish to execute prior to that time, and others focus on further institutionalizing our practices especially considering new University leadership. Our coalition views our goals as ever evolving. As we are all too aware, opportunities and challenges arise on a regular basis. This plan serves as our guidepost and direction, but innovation and spontaneity are encouraged.

Temple Votes is intentionally led by the Office of the Dean of Students. We have a unique position of working with departments that focus on student engagement as well as academic programs. Since our campus does not have an office specifically for civic engagement, the Dean's Office is able to lead this collaborative program with dedicated attention and the ability to communicate directly with upper-level administration. We will continue to invite and utilize new

voices and ideas throughout the process.

The nature of our coalition provides equitable and diverse voices, but we are committed to doing this. We have invited political organizations as well as those who represent historically marginalized populations. This will become more important in the upcoming year as many feel that their voting rights are being disregarded or eliminated. As will be seen in our goals, we will be more active and present for campus events, especially those that have diverse audiences.

## **Section II: Leadership**

As referenced in Section I, the home for Temple Votes will be in the Office of the Dean of Students. The reporting line for this effort is the Division of Student Affairs, which is part of the Provost portfolio. Based on the early success of Temple Votes, there is a high level of interest and support for the initiatives put forth by this working group.

Through our first two years of existence, we have agreed that having one central point person has helped coordinate efforts in an often-decentralized campus. Members of the coalition continue to bring perspective and opportunities related to their areas, but the demands of individual jobs make it challenging for additional people to take on leadership roles. The three previous leaders were part of the Division of Student Affairs' strategic planning group that created Temple Votes. That plan has completed and, though a new one is beginning, having consistent leadership has proven valuable.

Below is a roster of departments and organizations that have and/or continue to be part of Temple Votes.

- ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge
- Athletics
- Campus Vote Project
- Center for the Advancement of Teaching
- Civic Influences
- Committee of 70
- Community Affairs
- Criminal Justice Department
- Dean of Students
- GenEd Program
- Government Affairs
- HeadCount
- Institutional Diversity, Equity, Advocacy, and Leadership
- Klein College of Media and Communication
- League of Women Voters
- Masters of Public Policy
- Office of Sustainability
- Political Science
- Political Science Society

- Progressive NAACP
- Residential Life
- Temple College Democrats
- Temple Student Government
- Temple University Ambler Campus
- University Libraries

We will be creating training and involvement opportunities to bring new student organizations into the Temple Votes efforts in Fall 2022. Additionally, the Office of Government Affairs works closely with the Philadelphia City Commissioner and the Pennsylvania State Department on election issues such as volunteers at polling locations, a voter registration API, and potential satellite election offices.

As one might infer from the above list, the membership and interest in Temple Votes provides both breadth and depth of knowledge and strengths. We will be able to engage classrooms by training faculty through the Center of Advancement for Teaching and including content in the GenEd program. Our administrative units provide access to students high-touch areas like move-in, student involvement fairs, and student organization trainings. Our student members ensure that the messages are being formulated and delivered in ways that are applicable to the student body. Though consistent membership has come from more liberal-minded student organizations, we maintain a content neutral and inclusive approach to our work so that students of varying political ideologies to participate. We will also work with Community Affairs so that the education and resources available to our students are also made available to residents of North Philadelphia.

It should also be noted that we have strong support from Information Technology Services and Strategic Marketing & Communications to get voter information added to our internal student portal, newsletters, University-wide emails, and social media.

In addition to the partner departments and organizations, we are going to be more heavily recruiting for fellowships and internships. To be honest, our first time through the election cycle was a whirlwind. We learned a lot about opportunities that are available but were not totally prepared to utilize them. The group is more confident in our abilities to recruit and supervise students who are interested in getting involved and compensate them through external grants and internal funding for student workers.

The group will resume hosting regular meetings at the beginning of July to prepare for the upcoming Fall semester. Meetings will be held bi-weekly in hybrid formats, with email updates in between those meetings. Like most institutions of higher education, Temple University has experienced high levels of turnover. I am pleased to say that in most instances of staff transition, Temple Votes involvement has been “handed off” to a new colleague, helping to maintain University-wide interest.

### **Section III: Commitment**

Temple University’s [mission](#) includes the goals of preparing students for active citizenship and

to promote “service and engagement throughout Philadelphia, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the nation and the world.” Along with other institutional commitments, our new University leadership has communicated a desire to be innovative in our work in ways that connect with the community and prepare students to excel after graduation. These tenets are communicated to our University and North Philadelphia communities. Temple has and will continue to participate in the ALL In Presidents’ Commitment to Full Student Voter Participation.

While all curriculum is being evaluated to ensure that students are being prepared for a post-pandemic workforce, Temple maintains a commitment to civic engagement and information literacy through [the GenEd program](#). The goals are for students to be able to decipher truth in information and engage in issues of public concern with awareness of diverse values and interests.

Over the last two years, the diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) efforts within schools, colleges and administrative units has increased dramatically. The DEI Collaborative will be a key stakeholder group for information sharing as we approach the 2022 General Election. Additionally, Residential Life maintains a curriculum for students who live on-campus. That curriculum will continue to help students towards two specific outcomes related to civic engagement:

- Students will be able to make informed decisions
- Students will be able to continuously reevaluate their impact on communities

We will closely partner with University Housing and Residential Life to incorporate voter registration into the move-in process in ways that we have not been able to do since the start of the pandemic. We will also continue the work we began in 2020 to distribute template presentations to student organizations and faculty so that they can deliver voter registration and education information to their members and enrolled students. We hopefully anticipate that Fall 2022 will have few public health restrictions on campus, so we are excited to be able to have a far greater in-person presence of Temple Votes than in the past!

#### **Section IV: Landscape**

Temple University does not set forth University-wide learning outcomes for students. Civic learning and democratic engagement are listed in the mission statement and GenEd program as well as many of the program outcomes at the [school and college levels](#). Those outcomes are all assessed at course and program levels, but Temple Votes is not practically able to review all of [those reports](#).

Temple University regularly participates in the National Survey of Student Engagement. The last time that this was administered was 2019, so that available data is the same of that reported in our 2020 Action Plan. It is again provided below.

Temple students showed “higher engagement in areas related to Reflective & Integrative Learning compared to peers in all three comparison groups.” This demonstrates that the

University is committed to connecting student learning and development in the classroom to their own experiences and societal problems. Temple participated in NSSE's Global Learning module in 2019. It found that Temple students are more likely than those in comparison groups to have taken or plan to take a course that focuses on global trends. Temple students also reported significantly higher average scores compared to students in the comparison group when asked if coursework from 2018-19 encouraged global learning aspects.

The NSSE data also shows that there is potential growth in the area of having discussions with students from different political views since 61% of seniors reported they "very often" or "often" had discussion with people from a different political view compared to 67% of seniors in the Highest Research Activity comparison group.

While these numbers are high, providing faculty with tools to engage in discussions with students will be very valuable in the highly polarized environment. We will continue to work with the Center for the Advancement of Teaching on workshops and discussion groups that share resources created by both Temple Votes and external partners like [Civic Influencers](#).

Temple Votes also has access to NSLVE data for the first time. Though our students are showing up at the polls at higher rates than our peers, there is room for growth. We will be able to utilize our [2018 and 2020 reports](#) to identify and act upon opportunities for improvement. This will be further discussed in Section VII.

As mentioned previously, we have worked and will continue to work with student organizations to educate and activate their members. A barrier that we face is a loss of organizational knowledge because of the pandemic. Many of our organizations are struggling to execute their own ideas, so adding voter registration will be a challenge. We will be prepared to make this as effortless as possible for them by offering presentation templates, student trainings, and guest presenters.

One of the external barriers that we face is being part of a complex political environment. Temple University is a state-related institution, and Temple Votes is a non-partisan effort. We have struggled to engage students across the political spectrum and those who are involved, need to be trained to not allow personal feelings enter their talking points. We will continue to emphasize this message while still allowing their passions to come through as we try to recruit more messengers for the cause.

Early enrollment reports show that our incoming students are the most diverse in known history of the institution. We have a very high number of students of color as well as first-generation students entering Temple University in Fall 2022. With our NSLVE data in mind, we will be strategic and intentional about engaging those populations in voter registration efforts. Our voting rates among students of color is lower than students who identify as White. We are planning to make specific outreach to those communities and provide a more personal approach to guiding students through the registration process. This is further explained in our section outlining goals.

Pennsylvania will have a very important election in 2022 that involves but Senate and Gubernatorial races. We have adopted the philosophy that students should vote where they are most motivated and where it is most convenient. Many students saw the importance that

Philadelphia and Pennsylvania had on the 2020 Presidential Election, so we feel confident that many students will be motivated to participate this year. For Fall 2022, this might mean new or updated registrations in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Pennsylvania's vote-by-mail process makes this easier for students, but we are still working on several initiatives to make registration and in-person voting as easy as possible. We believe that we have the resources necessary to be successful and will continue to strategize in ways that help the institution be successful.

## **Section V: Goals**

Temple Votes is highly motivated by our early success within the Campus Vote Project and ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge. Being able to achieve Voter Friendly Campus status as well as a Gold Campus seal was very rewarding, but we know there is more work to do. Our midterm election rate was 45%. Below are some of our goals in more detail.

### Short-term goals

- Incorporate voter API through our student portal in partnership with the Pennsylvania State Department by August 1, 2022.
- Update voter registration modules for student organizations and faculty by August 1, 2022.
- Incorporate voter registration into the move-in process by August 20, 2022.
- Create marketing plan for University-wide messaging about National Voter Registration Day and voter registration deadline dates by September 1, 2022.
- Host Constitution Day programming that focuses on senate races, voter registration, and polling booth demonstrations by September 17, 2022.
- Creating marketing assets in partnership with Temple Athletics by September 15 that utilize new head coaches and player to show how quick and easy it is to register to vote.
- Facilitate a faculty workshop on engaging in political discourse and voter registration information by September 30, 2022.
- Facilitate 10 classroom presentations within academic disciplines that had voting rates below the campus rate of 73% by September 30, 2022.
- Execute 8 voter registration tabling events at events for marginalized populations including OutTU, National Coming Out Week, Latino Heritage Month Programs, National Pan-Hellenic Council's Meet the Greeks by October 24, 2022.

### Long-term goals

- Increase midterm election voting rate by 15% by the year 2026.
- Increase general election voting rates by 7% by the year 2024.
- Increase voting rates for all academic disciplines to at least the current rate of 73% by 2028.
- Increase graduate student voting rate by 10% by 2026.
- Establish a local satellite election center near campus to mirror the efforts during 2020 election by 2024.

- Infuse work into academic advising – train academic advisors to ask students if they are registered to vote and provide educational materials if they are not
- Incorporate voter registration dates and Election Day in syllabus materials and course planning

## Section VI: Strategy

### *Short-term strategy*

Incorporate voter API through our student portal in partnership with the Pennsylvania State Department by August 1, 2022.	Dean of Students Office Government Affairs Information Technology Services
Update voter registration modules for student organizations and faculty by August 1, 2022.	Dean of Students Office Temple Student Government Center for the Advancement of Teaching
Incorporate voter registration into the move-in process by August 20, 2022.	University Housing and Residential Life
Create marketing plan for University-wide messaging about National Voter Registration Day and voter registration deadline dates by September 1, 2022.	Dean of Students Office Strategic Marketing & Communications
Host Constitution Day programming that focuses on senate races, voter registration, and polling booth demonstrations by September 17, 2022.	Dean of Students Office Temple Student Government Student Activities
Creating marketing assets in partnership with Temple Athletics by September 15 that utilize new head coaches and player to show how quick and easy it is to register to vote.	Athletics Dean of Students Office Strategic Marketing & Communications Klein College of Media and Communication
Facilitate a faculty workshop on engaging in political discourse and voter registration information by September 30, 2022.	Center for the Advancement of Teaching Dean of Students Office Civic Influencers
Facilitate 10 classroom presentations within academic disciplines that had voting rates below the campus rate of 73% by September 30, 2022.	Dean of Students Office GedEd College of Engineering College of Science and Technology Fox School of Business
Execute 8 voter registration tabling events at events for marginalized populations including OutTU, National Coming Out Week, Latino Heritage Month Programs, National Pan-	Dean of Students Office Institutional Diversity, Equity, Advocacy and Leadership Student Activities



Hellenic Council's Meet the Greeks by October 24, 2022.	Temple Student Government
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*Long-term strategy*

A campus committed to educating for civic learning, political engagement, and voter registration would embody the idea that it is everyone's role to do this work. Many times, institutions of higher education operate in silos. Recent events have brought faculty and staff to their limits in terms of the work they can do, so students often get referred elsewhere by a "that's not my job" mentality." If Temple University is to truly live its mission, the work must be done by everyone in whatever capacity they interact with students.

In order to achieve this, we must focus on three main things: faculty/staff education, partnership with Philadelphia, and resource allocation.

**Faculty/staff education:** Anecdotal information tells that many faculty and staff are reluctant to have conversations with students about political engagement and voter registration. Some are scared that they will give students the wrong information. This is understandable given the changes that are taking place in government on voting practices. Others are concerned that their personal opinions will be infused in the conversation, and they will then be criticized of imposing beliefs on others. Others simply think it is not their jobs. However, on a campus with more than 35,000 students, a model to *Ask Every Student* will require everyone's involvement. Therefore, Temple Votes must work towards educating faculty and staff about proper practices and what they can or should say as well as what they cannot and should not say. It would also involve educating faculty and staff on important dates, deadlines and civic holidays to incorporate into syllabi and course assignments. Faculty Senate can assist with this by endorsing the inclusion of said dates and deadlines, and encourage faculty at all levels to encourage students to get involved.

**Partnership with Philadelphia:** In 2020, students experienced the convenience of a satellite election office essentially on campus. This was possible because the venue was not able to host concerts, shows, and sporting events during the pandemic. Now that the venue is hosting events again, it is unlikely that it can be used as a satellite election office, but that does not mean our students will not expect the same convenience in the future. It will be important for the University to partner with the City Commissioner's Office to determine possible ways to remove barriers for student voting.

**Resource allocation:** Most institutions of higher education are facing uncertainty when it comes to enrollment, state appropriations, and budget cuts. Currently, all costs associated with Temple Votes initiatives are paid by the Dean of Students Office. As we seek to grow our campus presence now that we are back to normal in-person operations, it will be important to maintain current funding and secure internal/external resources to grow the work. To date, we have not asked other areas to contribute funding to the initiative. If we continue to grow and remain successful, we will need to explore how to sustain the efforts by securing grants, sponsorships, and other in-kind donations.

## **Section VII: NSLVE as a Resource for Colleges and Universities**

Temple University is glad to have joined the NSLVE study as of February 2020. We received our first reports and have analyzed the data extensively. The reports are currently shared on the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge website.

We plan to utilize the report and data to guide our efforts in Fall 2022. As listed in our short-term goals, we plan to outreach specifically to schools/colleges and student populations that seem to have lower voting rates. Our plan is to work with those areas to craft targeted message about why they should vote. For example, students within the College of Science and Technology may not be interested in politics, but if the last two years have taught us anything, science and politics are interwoven.

## **Section VIII: Reporting**

This plan will be posted on the Temple Votes website and utilized by the working group to drive our work. We plan to hold working group meetings over the summer where we will share the information and delegate roles and responsibilities. We are also going to host an open meeting at the start of the Fall semester to share our plan and garner interest from student leaders and student organizations about being involved. We intend to keep the plan as a working document so that new goals can be added and existing goals can be updated and edited.

While we will use the numbers to guide our outreach efforts in the future, it has been decided that it will not be posted on the Temple Votes website because of concerns regarding data accuracy. Because IDHE uses enrollment data for some statistics and voter eligibility data for others, the report is inconsistent. A specific discipline may have lower voter rates but is also known to enroll the higher numbers of international students who may not be eligible to vote. Therefore, we will not post a report that internal constituents may view as not reflective of their school or colleges true voter participation. We will share some of the data but only in a way (primarily in-person) where we can effectively explain the discrepancies in how the numbers are presented. Those presentations will include the following:

- Academic Advisors Meetings
- Associate Deans Meetings
- First-year seminars
- Temple Student Government meetings

The reports remain available in the ALL IN website in accordance with our agreement for participation.

## **Section IX: Evaluation**

The purpose of our evaluation will be to determine whether initiatives and activities have an effect on our overall voter registration rates and voting rates. We have learned from the 2020 election that making resources available online to student leaders and faculty was valuable as it allowed people to access it as they needed and in both synchronous and asynchronous formats.

Therefore, we will update all materials and continue to make them available to stakeholders.

While Temple Votes is entering our second major election cycle, it is the first time we will be able to coordinate in-person activities. Therefore, our evaluation process will utilize best practices of other ALL IN Challenge campuses and Voter Friendly Campuses with a longer history of participation. We are utilizing student workers during the summer to identify activities that they believe will be successful at Temple University, and will analyze their success immediately following activities based on the level of engagement that we have. Essentially, we will be utilizing all of our successful virtual engagement opportunities from 2020 and layering the in-person programs on top.

Though there are some concerns about the data provided by NSLVE, we will continue to lean heavily on those reports to analyze and evaluate our work. The metrics remain consistent in their reports year-to-year, so it is appropriate to see how our work is affecting voting rates. We have developed a strong partnership between the Dean of Students Office and Institutional Research and Assessment to identify positive outcomes that can be used in marketing our voting rate as well as growth areas, with the understanding that non-eligible voters may be included in the percentage.

Additionally, we have a member of our faculty, Dr. David Nickerson, whose research expertise is mobilizing student voters. He has served in an advisory capacity for our group to make sure that we are taking actions that are backed by research (e.g. peer leader presentations) and not doing things that have insignificant impact.

We are looking forward to having both experience from previous work under our belts and access to NSLVE data to evaluate our progress in registering, educating, and mobilizing students at Temple University in the voting process.