



The Pennsylvania State University 2022 Democratic Engagement Action Plan

Developed by: Tim Balliett, Director, Center for Character, Conscience, and Public Purpose

Executive Summary:

This nonpartisan democratic engagement action plan was developed by The Pennsylvania State University in Pennsylvania for the 2022 election. The purpose of this action plan is to increase nonpartisan democratic engagement and student voter registration, education, and turnout in the 2022 midterm election. The goals for The Pennsylvania State University for the 2022 election are: (1) increasing our student voter registration rate to 86% in 2022 and 88% in 2024, (2) increasing our student voter turnout rate to 50% in 2022 and 73% in 2024, and (3) increasing awareness of and number of PSU Votes programs.

Leadership:

Our leadership team includes the following:

- Tim Balliett – Director, Center for Character, Conscience, and Public Purpose
- Giselle Concepcion – Chair, Governmental Affairs, University Park Undergraduate Association
- Sydney Smichnick – President, League of Women Voters at PSU
- Laura Brown, League of Women Voters Center County liaison to Penn State
- Adam Romero, Vice President, Latino Caucus
- William O’Connell, President, College Independents
- Kulani Arrington, Political Action Chair, The Penn State Student Black Caucus
- Sam Ajah, President, College Democrats
- Bryant Atanasio, All in Dems
- Matthew Soska, President, College Republicans
- Zion Sykes, PA Youth Vote
- Brooklynn Jones, Campus Vote Project Student Advisory Board
- Maddie Hindman, President, Penn State Un-PAC
- Teagan Mayr, Penn State Community Organizer, Register Her
- Elliot Copeland, Penn State Students for Shapiro
- Taylor Root, President, Students for Takac
- Shea Bracken, Director, Student Affairs Communications and Marketing
- Nanci Rommel, Regional GOTV Coordinator, NextGen Pennsylvania
- Jessica O’Hara, Teaching Professor of Communications Arts and Sciences, General Education Faculty Scholars Civic Engagement Subcommittee
- Patrick Baxter, Producer/Director, WPSU Penn State
- Beth Lechman, Director, Centre County Office of Elections and Voter Registration
- Damon Sims, Vice President for Student Affairs

Commitment:

Penn State's mission statement includes the following: "As Pennsylvania's land-grant university, we provide unparalleled access to education and public service to support the citizens of the Commonwealth and beyond." A key element of that public service as a land-grant university is preparing its students to be educated and engaged citizens of the Commonwealth. This is particularly reflected in our General Education learning outcome of "Social Responsibility and Ethical Reasoning" and our university values of Respect, Discovery, and Community.

The Pennsylvania State University has been a signatory to the Higher Education Presidents' Commitment to Full Student Voter Participation since 2022.

Landscape:

The Pennsylvania State University is a multi-campus, land-grant, public research university that joined the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge in 2016.

In Fall 2021, The Pennsylvania State University had 88,914 students, of whom 80,021 were U.S. residents and 53,374 were Pennsylvania residents. A majority of out-of-state students are from the states of New Jersey, New York, Maryland, Virginia, and California. Males comprise 53% of students and females 46%. White students comprise 63%, Hispanic/Latino 8%, Asians 7%, Blacks/African Americans 6%, two or more races 3%, and unknown race 2% of all students. First generation college students are 21% of the student population. Of domestic students, 66% are 18-24 years old and 73% are 18-29 years old.

The Pennsylvania State University has authorized NSLVE.

Our institution had a 2020 campus voting rate of 68.8%.
Our institution had a 2020 voter registration rate of 83.8%.

Our institution had a 2018 voter turnout rate of 35.5%.
Our institution had a 2018 voter registration rate of 74.2%.

Our institution has been recognized by ALL IN with the following seals: 2016 Bronze, 2018 Silver, 2020 Silver.

Goals:

Our campus democratic engagement goals are:

- Increase student voter registration rate to 86% in 2022 and 88% in 2024.
- Increase student voter turnout rate to 50% in 2022 and 73% in 2024.
- Increase awareness of PSU Votes through increased views of social media posts, number of visits to a revised PSU Votes website, number of views of PSU Votes motivational and instructional videos, number of visits to the PSU Votes website and state voter registration websites following addition of voter registration to the course registration process in LionPATH (student information system), and attendance at new PSU Votes events.

Strategy:

The Pennsylvania State University will implement these strategies to increase nonpartisan democratic engagement and student voter participation:

- Add voter registration to student course registration in LionPATH, Penn State's student information system, during Spring 2022. This will require all students to click out to psuvotes.psu.edu, our comprehensive voting information website, in order to schedule courses.
- Revise the PSU Votes website to increase ease-of-use and provide more information on PA, out-of-state, and out-of-country registration and election information.
- Create motivational and instructional videos in collaboration with WPSU Penn State on the process of registration, mail-in ballots, voting, and obtaining non-partisan information. These will be sent to all students and made available to faculty for use in their courses.
- Create PSU Votes Ambassadors, a cadre of trained students who serve as representatives at PSU Votes tabling, class/student organization visits, and registration events.
- Collaborate with the Centre County Office of Elections and Voter Registration to identify best practices and most frequent mistakes made by students in the registration, mail-in ballot, and voting processes.
- Partner with League of Women Voters of Centre County and League of Women Voters at PSU to hold voter registration training sessions for PSU Votes Ambassadors and other student organizations conducting registration drives.
- Hold a PSU Votes HUB-Robeson Takeover Day during National Voter Education Week. The HUB-Robeson Center is the student union building at University Park. The event will include voter registration and voter education tables, food, games, music, and posting individual voting plans to obtain PSU Votes t-shirts.
- Hold daily PSU Votes registration tabling from mid-September through October 24 (last day to register).
- Host a gubernatorial and/or U.S. Senate race debate at Penn State University Park in conjunction with WPSU Penn State (PBS). If this is not possible, then host a debate between College Republicans and College Democrats at the HUB-Robeson Center.
- Host watch parties for gubernatorial and U.S. Senate race debates at the HUB-Robeson Center.
- Revise the PSU Votes marketing campaign to more fully utilize Student Affairs social media platforms, student e-newsletters, Penn State daily e-newsletter, direct emails (including at least one from university administration), Canvas (course instruction platform), Penn State Go (Penn State's official mobile app), Penn State Student Engagement Network Engagement App, University digital signage, banners, and traditional print advertisements. These materials will be shared with all 23 campuses, colleges, student governments, and recognized student organizations collaborating with PSU Votes.
- Revise the faculty voting resources webpage in collaboration with the General Education Faculty Scholars Civic Engagement Subcommittee.
- Hold an Election Day Celebration Event in the HUB-Robeson Center. The HUB is the polling place for almost all students living on campus.
- Create, purchase, and distribute PSU Votes promotional merchandise at events, tabling, and class visits.
- Partner with Intercollegiate Athletics to conduct a full class session during all student-athlete first year seminars, collaborate on student-athlete civic engagement programming, and develop student-athlete community engagement activities for Election Day.

Evaluation:

In addition to our 2022 NSLVE data, the Center for Character, Conscience, and Public Purpose will coordinate evaluation of our action plan in the following ways

- Number of new and updated registrations submitted at tabling and events conducted by PSU Votes and student organizations collaborating with PSU Votes.
- Number of visits to the PSU Votes website before and after adding voter registration to course scheduling, during course scheduling, following each major communications push, clicks out to the appropriate official state registration websites, etc.
- Number of views of PSU Votes motivational and instructional videos (social media, YouTube, PSU Votes website, etc.)
- Number of views of PSU Votes social media postings
- Number of PSU Votes class visits and students attending said classes
- Number of promotional items distributed
- Number of participants at PSU Votes events

Reporting:

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

Our institution has given ALL IN permission to publish our NSLVE reports which are posted on our campus page on ALL IN's website.

Our NSLVE report will be shared with the entire Penn State community via a Penn State Today article (daily e-newsletter) and the PSU Votes website. It will be shared directly with University administration (President's Council, deans, chancellors, and vice-provosts), Faculty Senate, student governments, and organizations on the PSU Votes leadership team and collaborate with PSU Votes. The campus action plan will be shared on the PSU Votes website.