

**UNIVERSITY OF  
BALTIMORE**

***Votes***

University of Baltimore  
All-In Campus Democracy Challenge  
Civic Action Plan

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## Executive Summary

The University of Baltimore has historically had industry-leading student registration and participation in national elections, receiving consistent recognition from All In for the past eight years. This UBalt Votes action plan has been developed to unite and guide the faculty, staff, and students at the university as they engage each other in our efforts to increase civic and voter engagement throughout the 2023-2024 academic year. Through collaboration and participation from student organizations, faculty members, and offices across campus, we aim continually engage and educate our students and Baltimore community members.

This plan is developed by members of the Rosenberg Center for Student Engagement and Inclusion (CSEI), a nonpartisan office on campus with goals to increase voter education, registration, and turnout. That said, although the severity has lessened, we continue to be mindful of the impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had on campus and the in-person experience. The UBalt campus has largely returned to normal and in-person operations, but students and faculty continue to utilize the flexibility of hybrid and asynchronous classes to equitably accommodate various needs throughout campus. We aim to account for this dip in participation in co-curricular activities via virtual classroom visits and asynchronous presentations.

## Leadership & Campus Partners

In the past, the University of Baltimore has been successful in engaging student leaders in the democratic process. Our campus partners, also known as our civic engagement group, has been composed of faculty, staff, and students from our College of Public Affairs, School of Law, Schaefer Center for Public Policy, Office of Government and Public Affairs, various student organizations across campus, and the previously mentioned CSEI and OSS departments.

However, due to departures and restructuring in our administration in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, our coalition had been largely decentralized. With that in mind, in 2023, the Rosenberg Center for Student Engagement and Inclusion hired a coordinator in order to reunite members and re-establish a formal coalition. Until this group can consistently meet to jointly coordinate the university's efforts, CSEI has temporarily become the primary working group, responsible for coordinating and implementing initiatives and events to increase democratic engagement on campus.

Our current partners include the following members, and while the coalition membership may fluctuate or evolve over time, we are currently communicating with the following offices and organizations to nominate members to include, which is also listed below.

Campus Partners			
Name	Department	Title	Affiliation
Suzanne Tabor	Office of the President	Executive Director of Government Affairs	Staff
Llatetra Esters	Office of Student Support	Dean of Students, Assistant Vice President of Student Success	Staff

Pavan Purswani	Office of Student Support	Director	Staff
Anthony Butler	Center for Student Engagement and Inclusion	Director	Staff
Elizabeth Purswani	Center for Student Engagement and Inclusion	Assistant Director	Staff
Atom Zerfas	Center for Student Engagement and Inclusion	Coordinator	Staff
Jennifer Keohane	Yale Gordon College of Arts and Sciences, Digital Communication Program	Professor, Director	Faculty
Elizabeth Ogun	Impact Baltimore, Campus Discourse & Debates Club, CSEI	Student Orgs President & Vice President, Andrew Goodman Foundation Ambassador	Student
Kaylin Townes	Center for Student Engagement and Inclusion	Andrew Goodman Foundation Ambassador	Student
Sofia Tesfayeova	Campus Discourse & Debates Club	Student Org President	Student

Proposed Offices to Nominate Representation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bob Parson’s Veteran Center – Staff</li> <li>• College of Public Affairs – Faculty/Staff</li> <li>• College of Public Affairs – Student</li> <li>• Career and Internship Center – Staff</li> <li>• Schaefer Center for Public Policy – Staff</li> <li>• School of Law – Faculty/Staff</li> <li>• School of Law – Students</li> <li>• Student Government Association – Student</li> <li>• Student Events Board – Student</li> <li>• Women of Color Student Association – Student</li> </ul>

## Institutional Commitments

The University of Baltimore has always demonstrated a strong commitment to CLDE. Embedded in its guiding documents is a strong connection to community and civic engagement, including acknowledging its role as an anchor institution in Baltimore. Within its mission, vision, and values, UBalt shows a strong commitment to creating global citizens who contribute to solving local and global challenges. University of Baltimore’s President Schmoke has made countless public statements regarding the community’s civic responsibility and right to vote, encouraging students to register and vote in local and national elections.

Through continued work with the Office of the President and our Marketing and Communications teams, we will emphasize our campus’ commitment to civic education and participation. Especially with the upcoming presidential election, we will reiterate how participation in elections is not only the personal responsibility of every citizen, but also a core value at UBalt. Below is a message from President Schmoke regarding recognition from All In after the 2020 election.

## To The University of Baltimore Community:

A few days ago, we learned that UBalt's level of student voter participation climbed into the 70-percent range during the 2020 presidential election -- a rise of about three points, and, most significantly, in an election cycle when the public health situation made it difficult to actually cast a vote. This increase was [documented](#) by the Institute for Democracy & Higher Education, creators of the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement.

Now, the University has received national recognition for this achievement: a [Gold Seal](#) from the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge for nonpartisan student voter participation in the 2020 contest. It's the second time in the past two presidential election cycles in which UBalt has received accolades for having a large number of students turn up at the polls.

For many of us, this award is also a reminder of our community's [commitment](#) to civic engagement. That's always been a part of life at the University, and these days it's especially nice to receive public acknowledgment for it. Whether it's our mix of academic programs, our history, our mission -- something strong and lasting drives us to participate in the democratic process. We wouldn't have it any other way.

Everybody has their political views; some are highly involved in the issues, others less so. There's a lot of talk about division. But what I believe we can agree on is that exercising our right to vote is the best way to be heard and encourage change. Let's keep adding those gold stars, and stay focused on the goal of a government that works ... because the voters do.

Have a great rest of the week.

Kurt L. Schmoke

President

## UBalt Student Leaders Encourage Voter Engagement

Organized by the

October 31, 2022

Contact: Office of Advancement and External Relations

Phone: 410.837-5739

### Planning to vote? Here's how you can participate:

UBalt is hosting an Election Day Bash on Tuesday, Nov. 8 from 3-6 p.m. in the Student Center's second floor open space. Students are welcome to enjoy food, games and prizes. Let us know if you plan to attend.

If you need help identifying your polling place, are looking to learn more about the candidates and questions on your ballot, or want to know your options for voting, visit UBalt's voting resource guide.



**Britney Green** may never forget the first time she got to cast her ballot in an election. The emotional weight of this moment she had been waiting for hit her the moment she got in line and made her way to the ballot box.

Raised in a multi-cultural home in Dallas, the M.P.A. student (pictured above, left) says she was taught from a young age to respect culture, differences and community. Those lessons set the foundation for what would become a life of community and civic engagement.

"For me, it's the ability to impact change," she says. "Growing up in the south, I was witness to a lot of things that, unfortunately, because certain people didn't vote, things stayed the status quo. Being able to exercise that right to vote, No. 1, and then secondly, actually showing up to do so, is really important to me."

Green and **Kristin Robinson** (pictured above, right) a University of Baltimore School of Law student, are the 2022 Andrew Goodman Foundation Vote Everywhere Ambassadors at the University. They work with **Anthony Butler**, director of the Rosenberg Center for Student Engagement and Inclusion, in planning and hosting events to urge voter engagement across the campus community. This fall, they set up an information table for National Voter Registration Day—though most students they met had already registered—and on Nov. 8, they will host an Election Day Bash in the UBalt Student Center.

The Vote Everywhere Ambassadors are part of a national, non-partisan movement, driven by The Andrew Goodman Foundation. They have access to training, resources and a peer network to help them increase registered voters, break voting barriers, and, generally, encourage civic engagement among students in their college community. Butler considers it a unique task at UBalt where students are already very engaged and informed as voters.

"When we have events on campus, for example, it's never like, 'Why did you become a legislator?' It's like, 'So you voted this way on House Bill 214, can you tell us more about that?' Our students are just super informed and engaged."

UBalt has consistently been recognized for its voter engagement, including most recently, *Washington Monthly's* 2022 rankings included UBalt among America's Best Colleges for Student Voting.

## Voter Engagement at The University of Baltimore

### What is UBalt Votes?

Civic and democratic engagement are central to the mission of higher education and the values of The University of Baltimore. While these types of engagement embody a wide variety of activities, participation in local, state, and federal elections is a real and tangible way for our students, staff and faculty to affect our community. The Rosenberg Center for Student Engagement and Inclusion is committed to ensuring that the UBalt community always has access to resources and information to be fully prepared to take part in the democratic process.

**"Democracy cannot succeed unless those who express their choice are prepared to choose wisely. The real safeguard of democracy, therefore, is education."**

**-Franklin D. Roosevelt**

Whether you are brand new to voting or an experienced voter, you can learn more about the voting process and resources available to you here. Finally, please note that all of the resources on this page are provided by nonpartisan entities.

### Important Updates

#### Continuing the Conversation

- [UBalt Law in Focus](#) (presented by UBalt School of Law): [Sign up for upcoming discussions](#) and [review past discussions](#).
- [Beyond Voting](#): Ideas for civic participation after the election, including information about how to evaluate media sources and confront misinformation.
- [How to Respond to Election Stress](#).
- [Student Assistance Program](#): We know you might need someone to talk to, and the Student Assistance Program provides support for UBalt students 24/7
- [Link to Maryland State Board of Elections](#): Find out about early voting, frequently asked questions, and voter services.
- [Link to ACLU – Know Your Voting Rights](#): Find out what to do if you are uncertain about your rights, if someone is interfering with your right to vote, or if you encounter any difficulties voting.

Rosenberg Center for Student Engagement and Inclusion. Our UBalt Votes program works in collaboration with student organizations like the Campus Discourse and Debate Club to host nonpartisan forums and events for students to engage in moderated conversations about local and national political topics. Throughout this school year, we aim to host at least two open forums each semester. Furthermore, the Schaeffer Center for Public Policy has offered and will continue to offer election judge training in conjunction to several educational programs and discussions organized by the School of Law. Because this school year holds a presidential election, each of our colleges, as well as

numerous additional offices, such as our Bob Parson's Veterans Center, Office of Student Support, Career and Internship Center, and Library have committed to collaborating as we organize civic engagement events and opportunities throughout the year.

## Landscape & NSLVE Data

The University of Baltimore is a public university in the University System of Maryland, serving undergraduate, graduate, and law students. Our student body is composed of students from teenagers to seniors, averaging an age of 27 years old. Most of our students are heads of households, parents, and/or employed full-time. While our population spans across numerous races, we are a Primarily Black Institution with nearly 6% of our population composed of international students.

As of the 2020 NSLVE data, UBalt has a 72.6% voting rate and 86.9% voter registration rate. Of the 86.9% of students who were registered to vote, only 83.5% of them voted in the 2020 election. In comparison to previous election years, our registration rate has plateaued with a slight increase. UBalt's voting rate, however, declined to 58.5% in 2018, but significantly increased in 2020. These fluctuations can partially be attributed to the political climate as well as the steady 8% annual decline in our student population over the past six years.

Assuming that the NSLVE Race/Ethnicity data pertains purely to U.S. citizens, then the voting rate of every race/ethnicity measured increased by over 10% each. However, with our Asian population having a 52% voter rate, our Black population having a 72% voter rate, and our White population having a 77% voter rate, we can see that engaging and educating our campus minorities is key to increasing our overall voter rate. Furthermore, we find that our students between the ages of 18-21, 25-29, and 30-39 have the lowest voting rates amongst our age groups, especially students between 18 and 21 year olds. We also found that students in the Business, Management, and Marketing program, Computer and Information Sciences program, Health Professions program, and Psychology program also have the lowest voter turnout in comparison to the others. Lastly, despite having over 50% more students than our male population, female students have a 6% higher voting rate. By cross-examining this data, we are better able to identify which student bodies to target for voter registration and pledges to vote. Collaborating with student organizations and offices can help us to connect our Asian students, younger students, male students, and/or students in the previously listed programs to the voting process. In many cases, these categories may overlap, but we will proceed with minimal assumptions regarding where our absent voters are as we cast a wider net.

Although the University of Baltimore is primarily a commuter campus, the majority of our students live within the city limits. In the 2020 election, nearly 50% of our student voters used a mail-in ballot, despite the closest ballot drop box being over 15 miles away. Fortunately, Maryland has not placed further restrictions and barriers on voting so there is the potential to increase voter engagement through additional support and access.

## Goals

### Short Term

- Increase Voter Registration of Eligible Students from 86.9% in 2020 to 90% in 2024
- Increase Student Voting Rate by 72.6% in 2020 to 77% in the 2024 elections
- Receive ALL IN Highly Established Action Plan Seal by 2025
- Include at least 4 different student organizations in planning and implementing programming for democratic engagement in the 2023-2024 academic year
- Initiate programming that aims to increase democratic education and involvement among International Students in 2024
- Convene a Campus Voting Work Group in Spring 2024 to inform plans for a stronger collaboration around voter engagement efforts and begin to build a Campus Voting Coalition.



### Long Term:

The Center for Student Engagement and Inclusion, along with stakeholders, will continue to support The University of Baltimore's mission and serve as an engaged university and regional steward for both the campus and surrounding communities. The following long-term goals will support this work:

- Establish an early voting location on campus and/or host an on-campus ballot drop box by 2028
- Fully implement a formal Campus Voting Coalition (task force) of student leaders, faculty representatives, and office staff members to plan and implement democratic engagement programming throughout campus by 2026.
- Increase Student Voting Rate of eligible students to 90% by 2028

## **Strategies & Tactics**

Pursuing goals, especially long-term goals, can require multiple projects to achieve the desired outcome. Your strategies are the projects to achieve your goals, and the specific steps to carry out the strategies will be covered in the Tactics section.

### Short Term Strategies

1. While an increase of 3.1% in registered voters seems low, the challenge is in identifying and finding eligible students who have yet to register, especially since students are self-reporting. To do so, we are reaching out to student organization leaders and the Faculty Senate for their support in casting a wider net as we offer classroom visits and asking faculty members to poll their classes to determine which sections need ambassador support or if they only need to direct individuals to our webpage.
2. In order to increase voter turnout by 5.4% to 77% in the 2024 election, we will target undergraduate students and low-turnout majors based on NSLVE data. We will specifically work with staff and faculty from each of the following programs due to their voter turnout rates: Business, Management, and Marketing (64%), Psychology (64%), and Computer and Information Sciences (66%). Our Andrew Goodman Student (AGF) Ambassadors will continue to host classroom visits for voter registration. In collaboration with the faculty, they will also collect pledges to vote, which includes assisting students to develop a plan for early voting, mail-in ballots, or day-of voting.
3. While this action plan is currently being developed by members of CSEI, we have begun a search for additional members to form a Campus Voting Coalition and intend to utilize its collaboration potential to formulate a stronger Action Plan in order to receive the ALL IN Highly Established Action Plan Seal by 2025.
4. We have established a partnership with one of twelve student organizations on campus - the Campus Discourse & Debate Club, to plan a series of forums. However, we will continue meeting with student organization leaders, especially those in Student Government Association, through monthly roundtables to assess their capacity for engagement and their

level of connection civic engagement or related topics. In doing so, we expect to have at least four student organizations consistently engaged in our campus efforts.

5. Throughout the Spring semester, we will be collaborating with our Transform Mid-Atlantic (TMA) Fellow to assess the need for and capacity to organize educational programs that target international students. The Diversity and International Services office will be an instrumental part in assessing the needs and interests of international students, as well as helping to foster conversations. However, the International Students Association would lead the efforts to compile topics and legislation directly relevant to their aims in order to disseminate applicable information and host discussions.
6. We will convene a Campus Voting Work Group in Spring 2024 by communicating with departments across campus. Along with previous members of the civic engagement group, we will recruit active members through volunteers and nominations from the list of proposed offices.

### Long Term Strategies

1. Because the Schaffer Center offers election judge training, we will begin discussions with them and Justinia Carter from the School of Law, as well as the Office of the President to determine the potential locations and capacity to host an early voting location and an on-campus ballot box. If we have the capacity, including staffing, then we will work with the Attorney General's office to communicate possibilities with the Maryland State Board of Elections office.
2. In order to re-establish our Campus Voting Coalition, we have begun to reach out to previous members of the civic engagement group. Moreover, we are also reaching out to organizers of civic engagement events. Following their responses, we will make additions based on representation from throughout the campus. By addressing the faculty and staff at their respective senate meetings, we will offer the opportunity to join and/or have offices nominate a member of their department to represent them and share pertinent information.
3. In addition to our efforts to increase voter registration rates among eligible students, to increase voter turnout, our focus will begin to shift towards the barriers to voting. Our current efforts are comprised of utilizing our Daily Digest, student organizations, faculty members, and marketing team to spread awareness about voter registration, early voting, mail-in voting, and election days. However, through forum discussions and surveying our population, we will also collaborate with our various offices to provide students with additional resources to access voting. Depending on the issues shared, these resources can include, but are not limited to providing transportation to ballot boxes and election sites, communicating with faculty to navigate class schedules and assignment dates, or assisting the UBalt community in understanding their registration and polling place.

## Reporting

The plan will also be directly shared with UBalt's administration, including, but not limited to the Office of the President, the Provost Office, the UBalt Foundation, and the deans and leaders of each college and office. This plan will be additionally communicated campus-wide to all students, faculty, staff, and administrators through UBalt's e-newsletter, the Daily Digest. The Daily Digest will also direct members to our UBalt Votes page, where the plan will be easily accessible along with our NSLVE data and additional voter resources.

Using the GivePulse online platform, known as "Bee Engaged" on campus, the University will share the plan with our community partners as we continue to host volunteer and service events, especially in relation to voter engagement. CSEI will also reach out to our marketing and media teams to further increase visibility, especially amongst our virtual and hybrid communities.

## Evaluation

Evaluation of the university's civic engagement work and progress towards the previously stated goals will be an ongoing process. The AGF Campus Champion and Student Ambassadors meet bi-weekly in order to discuss progress and next steps, but the focus of this school year, aside from the presidential election, will be to re-establish the Campus Voting Coalition so that there is a more formal assessment by a more substantial group of individuals from across the campus. Upon receipt of the updated 2022 NSLVE data, we will reassess our goals and strategies accordingly. Until then, the current team will be collecting the following data:

- Events, Classroom Visits, and Tabling
  - Audience Size
  - Number of Registered Voters
  - Number of Newly Registered Voters
  - Number of Voter Pledges
- Event & Engagement Surveys
  - Self-Reported Barriers to Voting
  - Self-Reported Barriers to Registration
  - Civic and Voter Engagement from faculty/courses, offices, and student organizations/events
- UBalt Votes Webpage & AGF UBalt Webpage
  - Number of Site Visits
  - Number of Additional Voter Registrations
  - Number of Additional Voter Pledges
- NSLVE Voter Registration & Voter Rates based on
  - Race/Ethnicity
  - Age
  - Sex
  - Academic Program
  - Level of Schooling
  - Method of Voting

## Points of Contact

Anthony Butler  
Director of the Center for Student Engagement and Inclusion  
[abutler@ubalt.edu](mailto:abutler@ubalt.edu)

Atom Zerfas  
Coordinator of Engagement and Service-Learning  
[fzerfas@ubalt.edu](mailto:fzerfas@ubalt.edu)