



CAMPUS DEMOCRACY CHALLENGE

The University of Scranton 2022 Action Plan

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Executive Summary:

The University of Scranton is working across campus to ensure that every eligible voter is prepared to vote during elections, is attuned to their civic responsibilities, and is empowered to become a democratically engaged member of the community. This campus initiative is led by the Office of Community and Government Relations in collaboration with the University of Scranton Student Government along with several on/off campus partners. Campus partners include: Political Science Club, Political Science Department, Student Life, Residence Life, The Political Dialogue Working Group, the Center for Ethics and Excellence in Public Service (CEEPS), and Campus Ministries. Our plan is informed by our Jesuit mission and core values with the aim of cultivating engaged citizens across campus that are women and men for and with others.

This plan was developed by the Office of Community and Government Relations in collaboration with our partners to ensure that The University of Scranton has a cohesive, continuous, and clear strategy in place to engage constituents across campus in the democratic process of voting and to foster civic engagement as a priority on our campus. We are working collectively under the leadership of the Office of Community and Government Relations in collaboration with Student Government.

This 2022 plan is already being implemented and will continue to develop based on All In's feedback as we prepare for the 2022 midterm elections. This plan is dynamic and will continuously adapt based on the campus needs and other factors (e.g., our previous Action Plan from the 2020 election cycle was implemented on campus with modifications made to accommodate for COVID-19, with a focus on targeting our audience through social media platforms, virtual/phone meetings, in-person events/activities where possible and our dedicated resource page: www.scranton.edu/RoyalsVote). The Royals Vote dedicated website is updated frequently to establish the legacy of voting.

The main goals of our plan are:

1. Ensure all eligible voters in our campus community are prepared for elections by registering to vote, knowing how to vote, and understanding their voter rights.

2. Providing voter education and resources to help prepare our campus population to make an informed decision on their ballots that reflect their personal values, morals, and causes.
3. To work across differences to find common ground that keeps our campus community one of inclusiveness, solidarity, and diversity.
4. Provide resources to our first-time voters that will help establish living a life as an engaged citizen.
5. Asking ourselves, “How can we continue the legacy of voting?” after Election Day by remaining civically engaged and active to the causes our student’s support.

Our goals are both short and long term. Immediate short-term goals focus on ensure that all eligible campus constituents are registered and ready to vote. The long-term goals focus on continuously broadening our collation and bringing in additional collaborators with the ultimate goal of ensuring that The University of Scranton is democratically and civically engaged.

This 2022 action plan is implemented on our campus in Scranton, PA. Every vote matters, but as a new “purple” state, Pennsylvania also has a unique role that it plays in Federal elections.

This action plan was developed to ensure that there is a consistent and clear plan in place to address the important issues of civic and democratic engagement at The University of Scranton in alignment with our Catholic and Jesuit values, which call us each to recognize the wholeness of each person, care for our common home, and remember that we are men and women for and with others. These Jesuit values are not just words on paper, but instead an active lived mission that animates all that we do here at The University of Scranton. Voting is an act of love and by working with our campus constituents, we aim to cultivate a campus climate that is inclusive, engaged, and socially responsible.

Leadership:

Our leadership team includes students, faculty, and staff from across our campus community that represent the key areas of focus. We’ve expanded our leadership team with the goal of meeting over the summer to prepare for the Fall

2022 semester. Faculty members may not be available for summer meetings, so we have a goal to meet again in the beginning of the Fall 2022 semester to organize for the upcoming midterm election cycle and to discuss new programming. The core leadership team works closely together to ensure they are addressing the current needs of our campus population.

The campus leadership team is as follows:

1. Carolyn M. Bonacci; Community and Civic Engagement Coordinator (Civic Captain)
2. Julie Schumacher Cohen; Assistant Vice President for Community and Government Affairs
3. Student interns in the Office of Community & Government Relations
4. CEEPS student intern (this year Caroline Ries)*
5. Student Government Officer(s) (this year SG President Clara Downey)
6. Dr. JoyAnna Hopper; Political Science Faculty/Co-Director CEEPS*
7. Dr. Jean Harris; Political Science Faculty/Co-Director CEEPS/member, League of Women Voters*
 - a. (alternate; Dr. Michael Allison)
8. Kayla Bettachini; Asst. Director for Student Engagement*

*new members added since 2020 plan

In addition to the campus leadership team, representatives from other campus groups and clubs including the Campus Democrats, Campus Republicans, and the Political Dialogues Working Group have supported and collaborated with the leadership team on civic and democratic engagement efforts. Additionally, for the 2022 plan, the leadership team will outreach and collaborate with representatives from the Cross Cultures Centers, the Commuter Student Association, the Office of Equity and Diversity, and the newly formed Louis Stanley Brown Black Student Union. It is also our long-term goal to identify and outline specific ways in which Royals Vote can be supported and collaborate with Athletics and our Alumni Engagement Office.

Our campus leadership team works closely with local, regional, and national (and international in the case of non-partisan dialogue and the Jesuit network) organizations including:

1. The City of Scranton (Mayor's Office)
2. Black Scranton Project
3. Scranton Public Library

4. The Greater Scranton MLK Commission
5. League of Women Voters
6. Ignatian Solidarity Network
7. Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities (includes collaboration with subgroups in community relations and community-based learning)
8. Essential Partners
9. When We All Vote
10. ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge
11. PA Department of State

We are additionally submitting an application to become a Voter Friendly Campus this year and hope to include them as a future partner. The core leadership team (Bonacci, Downey, Hudak, Shaffer) will meet with new faculty member and CEEPS co-director Dr. JoyAnna Hopper to discuss a plan to connect more closely with the local elections office. Typically, candidate debates are hosted by the League of Women Voters (represented by Dr. Jean Harris on this leadership team). Dr. Harris will be on sabbatical for the coming election cycle, so Dr. Michael Alison will be engaged along with the aforementioned members of the leadership team to collaborate on outreach and connecting with the Lackawanna County Board of Elections to identify modes of collaboration, which may include procuring materials and information related to candidates running in Scranton, PA.

The captain of our leadership team (Civic Captain) is Carolyn M. Bonacci, Community and Civic Engagement Coordinator within The Office of Community & Government Relations. This office maintains at least 2 interns year-round, who serve as student leaders. Incoming 2022 interns include Olivia Hudak and Karla Schaffer. An additional key leader is a member of the Student Government Cabinet, which will be Student Government President Clara Downey for the 2022-2023 academic year.

The working group communicates regularly via email and will be convened for quarterly meetings (ideally in-person but via Zoom if necessary). To keep the working group engaged, Student Government has developed a continuance plan to ensure this key department is continuously involved and represented. The Office of Community and Government Relations leads our campus effort with the Community and Civic Engagement Coordinator and interns having civic and democratic engagement embedded in the responsibilities of these roles (regardless of the individuals in those positions).

Should a member of the working group or office decline or step away from participation, the leadership team will work together to encourage participation and/or identify alternate representation. We work to remind our campus collaborators that civic engagement and democratic engagement are mission oriented and tied to our University learning outcome for students to “Employ their knowledge and intellect to address situations in a way that demonstrates a devotion to the spiritual and corporal welfare of other human beings and by a special commitment to the pursuit of social justice and the common good of the entire human community.”

Commitment:

Though our campus has not yet signed the Higher Education President’s Commitment to Full Voter Student Voter Participation, it is under review by the administration with the goal for our new President Fr. Joseph Marina, S.J. to sign the pledge before the 2022 midterm elections.

The leadership team is committed in visibly and widely communicating with students about voting. We have implemented use of social media channels, regularly updating the Royals Vote dedicated voter resource website, using posters around campus with QR codes to register voters from their smartphones, and creating outreach programming to First-Year Experience courses and within residence halls via Residence Life.

The leadership team is committed to identifying new ways to further enfold civic and democratic engagement into the full scope of our campus experience. As mentioned, our campus frequently hosts civic events such as candidate debates, lectures, film screenings, city and county meetings (open to campus community), and is currently engaged in a 2-year National Endowment for the Humanities project, “Scranton’s Story, Our Nation’s Story,” in response to the NEH’s call for programming leading up to the 250th anniversary of our nation with the theme of “Renewing Our Civic Promise.” Project programming is focused on cultivating community and civic engagement with a special focus on underrepresented groups and under told stories.

Unfortunately, after a careful review our campus was in the past determined to not meet the requirements to become a polling location by the Lackawanna County Board of Elections due to accessibility requirements, however the closest polling location to campus is 530 Monroe Ave (0.4 miles from the main

campus address and even closer to our residence halls and off-campus housing) and we hope to continue to revisit this possibility in the future.

The University of Scranton's Core Educational Mission animated by Ignatian spirituality, particularly by two key concepts:

Magis, which describes the quest for excellence and inspires one to do more, beyond their perceived capabilities. Through this inspiration students will aspire to high levels of accomplishment that enhance personal achievement and their preparedness and ability to contribute and lead as members of society. Civic and democratic engagement are two key features of *Magis*.

Cura personalis means recognizing students as unique individuals and helps them to develop intellectually, socially, and spiritually in diverse manners. The University of Scranton is dedicated to recognizing and honoring the uniqueness of each student and in turn encourages students to see this same uniqueness in each person they encounter. This focus on the nuances of humanity is vital to our students as they work to become men and women for and with others.

The 2020 plan was The University of Scranton's first year utilizing an action plan. Additionally, the newly envisioned position of Community and Civic Engagement Coordinator has empowered the University to take clear action leading up to the 2020 election and beyond. Although our work is still nascent, the clear connection of civic and democratic engagement to the University's overall mission and core values made its incorporation into our campus climate a natural fit. This was made evident in our 2020 NSLVE report that showed a significant increase in student voter registration and voter turnout.

In addition to the presentations to First Year Seminar courses, it is the aim of the leadership team to begin to foster a closer relationship with academic affairs to incorporate the civic dimension of life into their courses and curriculum as a long-term goal. Co-circular engagement includes the various modes and methods previously outlined, which include nonpartisan political dialogues, voter registration drives/posters, social media campaigns, conference presentations, and one-on-one voter support. An additional short term goal is to add a new button feature to the Royals Vote resource that will allow interested students to "get involved."

Landscape:

Our campus demographic data and voting data is subject to change each year. The most recent University of Scranton report (from 2021-2022 Fact Sheet) reflected the student population is as follows:

Enrollment as of October 1st

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Undergraduate	3,810	3,729	3,792	3,658	3,487
College of Arts & Sciences (CAS)	1,525	1,556	1,640	1,602	1,588
Panuska College of Professional Studies (PCPS)	1,288	1,177	1,204	1,158	1,091
Kania School of Management (KSOM)	895	904	846	832	759
No School Affiliation (includes former CGCE)	102	92	102	66	49
Graduate	1,563	1,557	1,461	1,299	1,205
College of Arts & Sciences (CAS)	54	47	45	39	36
Panuska College of Professional Studies (PCPS)	910	945	828	719	667
Kania School of Management (KSOM)	569	550	577	536	488
No School Affiliation (includes former CGCE)	30	15	11	5	14
On-Campus Graduate	699	708	711	693	685
Online Graduate	864	849	750	606	520
Total University	5,373	5,286	5,253	4,957	4,692

Due to COVID-19, enrollment in 2020 is as of 9/17/2020.

Current demographical data was unavailable during the drafting of this document but will be obtained from the Office of Institutional Research and incorporated into the campus action plan.

Goals:

The University of Scranton's short-term goals are as follows:

1. Educate our entire campus in the democratic process with the goal of full participation meaning that eligible voters are registered to vote and ready to cast their ballots.
 - a. Explore the "Ask Every Student" process for the 2022-2023 academic year.
2. Provide various opportunities for members of our campus community to reflect on their own values and understand how their vote reflects those values and to encourage civic engagement beyond the election cycle.
3. Provide easy access to voter and civic education to empower eligible voters in understanding how they can become active forces for change in our world.
4. Identify the most impactful and efficient way to communicate with students throughout their campus experience and after graduation.
5. Review data from 2020 NSLVE to identify target areas of focus.

- a. Review process underway and will continue through summer 2022.
- 6. Student civic leaders participate annual in AICUP Advocacy Week with students meeting with local legislators to discuss the importance of PHEEA grant funding and other important issues. Prior to this event, students meet with the Community and Civic Engagement Coordinator and the Assistant Director of Financial Aid to learn about the importance of advocacy work, learn how to draft an advocacy memo, and to discuss the process for engaging with their legislators.

Our long-term goals are as follows:

1. Continuously engage and educate our campus community, focusing on first-time voters, in the civic process beyond Election Day by providing actionable next steps.
 - a. Focusing on registering first-time voters through a more systematic integration of voter registration and education around the democratic process of voting in First Year Seminar courses.
2. To emphasize the importance of midterm and local elections, along with providing opportunities for education and discussion around staying civically engaged outside of election cycles.
3. Collaborating to secure eligible voters' preparations to continue civic engagement and update their voter registration should they relocate.
4. Outreach and collaboration with additional campus and off-campus partners, specifically in the areas of Athletics and Alumni Engagement and becoming a Voter Friendly Campus.
5. Identify a leader from each of the University's 3 colleges to serve as a liaison or representative on the leadership team.
6. Explore creating a "Royals Vote Student Civic Engagement Ambassadors" program to train civically and democratically engaged students to sever as peer-leaders.

Strategy:

Our leadership team has used numerous strategies and organized various events to engage our campus community in the civic process. Due to COVID-19, we adapted and modified our methods to approach a socially distanced way of campaigning for elections. With the help of our student leaders and faculty members of the Political Science department: classroom voter presentations (in-

person or virtual), virtual voter registration drives, virtual education events including film screenings, debates, lectures etc., nonpartisan political dialogues, officer hours dedicated to answering voters' questions, and posters scattered across campus with QR codes that immediately link an eager voter to a nonpartisan voter guide.

At The University of Scranton, our mission and core values are infused with our strategy to increase student voter turnout. As a Catholic and Jesuit institution, we believe it is important that our campus community sees engaging the democratic process of voting and being civically engaged as an extension of how we live our faith and show love for others. We are inspired by our partners at the Ignatian Solidarity Network who proclaim, "Voting Is an Act of Love." We seek to create multi-issue voters here on campus who understand how their involvement in civics can bring change to our world. Additionally, our core campus value emanates from the Ignatian-Jesuit characteristic of *cura personalis*, Latin for "care for the whole person." This value embodies the dedication to promoting human dignity which our campus community finds in the power of voting.

Our strategies, concentrate on connecting with students via the modes and methods most frequently used that include multiple touchpoints both virtually and in-person through the use of social media platforms along with lectures, nonpartisan political dialogues, reflection on social justice issues and guided "Examens" hosted in collaboration with Campus Ministries, and our flourishing "Royals Vote" resource page dedicated in providing up-to-date voting information. Specifically:

1. The University of Scranton Student Government created election related info graphs we posted across social media. These topics included registering to vote, making a voting plan, understanding the ballot, and a general student voter guide.
2. Creating a dedicated resource page to share nonpartisan voting information, links to important voting websites, and to offer ways to reflect on values and issues before voting.
3. Various social media campaigns that involved the campus community to submit comments or pictures. Such campaigns included: "What's Your WHY?" for National Voter Registration Day and "Vote Today! Be and Active Citizen Tomorrow!" to engage student interest in civic education beyond Election Day.

4. Hosting nonpartisan political dialogues for students held on or around Constitution/Citizenship Day, prior to elections, and every spring semester.
5. Collaborating with the Political Science Department and CEEPS in an Analysis and Q&A session for anyone who had voting related questions.

NSLVE:

The University of Scranton has authorized NSLVE (The National Study of Learning, Voting and Engagement).

Evaluation:

The evaluation of our civic action plan will be done by the Office of Community and Government Relations. We will evaluate our action plan mostly by soliciting student feedback on the civic engagement process as well as the aftermath. In order to evaluate their feedback, we will meet key student groups and work with leaders of students' groups including Student Government president, Dean of Students, and members of Residence Life. Additionally, we will utilize attendance dates/numbers for any online events and track our hashtags on social media to assess the reach of our social media campaigns.

Reporting:

We will report our campus action plan and NSLVE reports by posting these documents on our campus website and sharing with our campus community. Our campus has not confirmed a plan to post our NSLVE reports on our campus website.