

2022 TOMMIES VOTE



Civic Learning & Engagement Action Plan

TABLE OF CONTENTS

3

OVERVIEW

4

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

5-7

LEADERSHIP & CEVEA

8-9

COMMITMENT & MISSION
CAMPUS & COMMUNITY LANDSCAPE

10-11

GOALS

12-13

STRATEGY

14-15

NSLVE ENGAGEMENT

16

REPORTING & EVALUATION

OVERVIEW

ST. THOMAS CEVEA | 03



With a residential four-year campus in St. Paul, Minnesota, graduate programs and a two-year college in Minneapolis, and a campus in Rome, the University of St. Thomas is the largest of the 17 private colleges and universities in Minnesota. Founded in 1885 as a high school, college, and seminary for Catholic immigrants, the university's 10,000 students – historically drawn from Minnesota and the Upper Midwest – are increasingly diverse in geography, ethnicity, and social class.

Our recently formed Racial Justice Initiative, headed by nationally renowned scholar and activist Dr. Yohuru Williams; our new Morrison Family College of Health, focused on health equity and headed by Dr. MayKao Hang, previously president and CEO of the Wilder Foundation; and Dougherty Family College, an internal two-year college designed to serve first-generation college students: All are but a few examples of the transformative work being done – civically, socially, academically – at St. Thomas.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ST. THOMAS CEVEA | 04

A strong commitment to nonpartisan civic education and voter engagement is embedded in our mission and work at the University of St. Thomas, led in recent years by the Civic Engagement, Voter, Education, and Advocacy (CEVEA) taskforce and leadership team. The CEVEA taskforce is made up of representatives from campus constituencies including faculty, staff, administration, and students. This taskforce is responsible for the design and implementation of the Tommies Vote 2022 Action Plan.

The 2020 election generated strong momentum for civic engagement at St. Thomas that the university is excited to build upon in years to come. For 2022 specifically, CEVEA leadership has identified several short- and long-term goals. These include:

- Increase voter registration of undergraduate students on the St. Paul and Minneapolis campuses to over 90 percent.
- Help undergraduate students learn to advocate for issues and connect those students with federal, state, and local officials while maintaining our institutional responsibility to refrain from partisan political activity.
- Embed voter registration into ongoing events such as undergraduate student orientation, September move-in weekend and "welcome bag" canvassing for neighborhood students.
- Establish the St. Paul campus as an early voting location for current and future elections, which would benefit both our students and campus neighbors.

We articulate and expand upon these goals later in this report.

This report also details intentional strategies that St. Thomas will implement to help the university reach the goals that we have set. These strategies include, but are not limited to, implementing the Ask Every Student project, intentionally engaging with student organizations, encouraging participation in Day at the Capitol events, utilizing National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) reports, engaging more intentionally with neighborhood students (many of whom vote in the community where they were raised), and working with key partners like Lead MN, Campus Compact, and Ready to Run.

St. Thomas acknowledges the challenges that exist in our current times and remains steadfast in the commitment to increasing voter education and access as well as helping our politically diverse student body deal with the deep political divisions of our day. This commitment to civic engagement and action aligns with the mission of the University of St. Thomas to "educate students to be morally responsible leaders who think critically, act wisely, and work skillfully to advance the common good."

LEADERSHIP & CEVEA

ST. THOMAS CEVEA | 05

The University of St. Thomas created the Civic Engagement, Voter Education, and Advocacy (CEVEA) taskforce in 2019 with a mission to “coordinate, streamline, and promote campus-wide civic engagement, voter education, and advocacy efforts in order to advance the common good.” CEVEA is a campus-wide collaborative whose 42 active members include faculty members, university administrators from Student Affairs, Academic Affairs, Government Relations, Office for Mission and library staff, among others, as well as six students. The CEVEA Leadership Team likewise represents a broad cross-section of university stakeholders.

CEVEA LEADERSHIP TEAM (LISTED ALPHABETICALLY)

- Roberto Aspholm, Assistant Professor of Social Work and CEVEA Faculty Liaison
- Amy Gage, Director of Neighborhood and Community Relations
- Katharine Hill, Associate Vice Provost for Faculty Advancement and Research
- Manuela Hill-Muñoz, Director of Innovation, Creative Content and Changemaking
- Amy McDonough, Chief of Staff and Liaison to the Office of the President
- Teri Mueller, Program Manager, Center for the Common Good
- Theresa Ricke-Kiely, Executive Director, Center for the Common Good

CEVEA TASKFORCE TEAM (LISTED ALPHABETICALLY)

ADMINISTRATION:

- Patricia Conde-Brooks, Executive Director, Student Engagement, and Inclusion
- Jennifer Snyder, Director of Development, College of Arts and Sciences

STAFF:

- Nayely Becerra Balbuena, Assistant Director, Student Diversity and Inclusion Services
- Margaret Cahill, Director, Campus Life
- Anna Ewart, Service Analyst, Innovation and Technology Services
- Bryan Helminiak, Associate Director, Residence Life
- Josh Hengemuhle, Assistant Dean, Dean of Students office
- Dustin Killpack, Associate Director, Center for the Common Good
- Ed Kim, Digital Project Manager, Marketing Insights and Communications
- Michael Spooner, Marketing Program Director, Marketing Insights and Communications
- Kelly Sardon-Garrity, Associate Director, Center for the Common Good
- Ozzy Zaimi, Program Manager II, Global Learning & Strategy, Office of International Students and Scholars

CEVEA TASKFORCE TEAM (LISTED ALPHABETICALLY) CONTINUED

ST. THOMAS CEVEA | 06

FACULTY:

- Mel Gray, Business Economics, professor emeritus
- Angela High-Pippert, Political Science
- Jessica Hodge, Sociology and Criminal Justice
- Mike Klein, Justice and Peace Studies
- Amy Levad, Theology
- Paul Lorah, Geography
- Timothy Lynch, Political Science
- Patricia Maddox, Sociology and Criminal Justice
- Amelia McNamara, Computer and Information Sciences
- Christopher Michaelson, Business Ethics and Social Responsibility
- Debra Petersen, Communication Studies
- Aaron Sackett, Marketing
- Muffet Trout, Education

STUDENTS:

- Tyus Edmond, Global Justice Movement Intern '22
- Sophia Faacks, Newman Fellow 2021 '23
- Cora Heinzen '22
- Julia Judson '21
- Dylan Monahan, Legislative Affairs Senator '23
- Mara Novillo '22
- Kate Ostaffe, CEEP Intern 2020 '23
- Khaled Shouman '23
- Skye Shultz, Global Justice Movement Intern '24

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS:

- Advocacy Representative: Catholic Charities of St. Paul and Minneapolis
- Campus Compact Minnesota/Iowa Representative
- Jessica Howell: Catholic Relief Services
- Emily Hunt: Ramsey County Elections Representative



CEVEA was organized to provide an institutional collective base for voter registration, civic engagement events, voter turnout efforts, and similar endeavors, formalizing activities that had previously been carried out via Student Affairs and Undergraduate Student Government (USG).

In the span of its relatively short two-year existence, CEVEA has sponsored and strategically implemented a wide range of activities to further its mission, including:

- Systematically scheduling voter registration events, including National Voter Registration Day, National Voter Education Week, and turnout events in the days leading up to elections;
- Panel events, including a legal panel in anticipation of the Derek Chauvin trial and a faculty and senior leadership panel reflecting upon the January 6, 2021 insurrection at the U.S. Capitol;
- Guest speaker events, including webinars with elected officials such as the Minnesota Secretary of State and county elections officials;
- Collaborating with community entities and neighboring universities in co-hosting events, such as candidate forums for the Saint Paul Public Schools board.

These efforts extend beyond national election years into local election years. For example, in Fall 2021, we hosted several voter-registration events – including a half-dozen registration posts on National Voter Registration Day – as well as a “Donut Forget to Vote” event the day before the election, featuring a food truck on campus to distribute fresh doughnuts, remind students to turn out the vote, and distribute reminders and voting swag.

CEVEA has also engaged with other university partners in a range of capacities in promoting civic engagement. For example, we hired student Campus Election Engagement Project interns during the 2020 election year, who lent instrumental support in working with Manuela Hill-Muñoz, director of innovation, creative content and changemaking, in coordinating student engagement efforts. We are also working with USG to navigate campus coverage of various events and endeavors and collaborate on the annual Day at the Capitol event sponsored by the Minnesota Private College Council. We have also prioritized a collaboration with the university’s Athletics Department to promote voter registration and turnout, given that the university’s recent transition into D1 allows us to participate in higher-profile Athletic Voting competitions.

These efforts have translated into heightened levels of democratic engagement among our student body. In November 2021, the University of St. Thomas was awarded the Platinum Seal for Voting Rate by ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge for our campus’ achievement of a student voting rate of 82.2 percent, an increase of nearly 5 percentage points from 2016; according to a recent report by Lead MN, it represented the fourth-highest student voter rate among all colleges and universities -- public or private -- in the state of Minnesota. It is also 16 percentage points higher than the national average.



COMMITMENT & MISSION

CEVEA is housed in the University of St. Thomas's Center for the Common Good, which reports to the Vice President for Mission. The Center for the Common Good oversees "collaborative curricular, co-curricular, and research initiatives that address civic and community challenges" and works to "encourage and support students, staff, and faculty to be transformational partners who work tirelessly for social justice in our local, national, and global communities."

CEVEA and the Center for the Common Good both embody the mission of the university, which reads: "Inspired by Catholic intellectual tradition, the University of St. Thomas educates students to be morally responsible leaders who think critically, act wisely, and work skillfully to advance the common good." Its community partners include Catholic Charities of St. Paul and Minneapolis and Keystone Community Services.

The University of St. Thomas is both broadly and specifically committed to the ideals of democratic engagement promoted by the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge. Moreover, the university has institutionalized resources dedicated toward this end and will continue to explore strategies for strengthening this work as we move forward into 2022 and beyond.

CAMPUS & COMMUNITY LANDSCAPE

A neighborhood-based city, St. Paul created 17 District Councils in the 1970s, at the behest of a popular and charismatic mayor, in order to foster citizen engagement and streamline citizen input to the City Council. Our home campus in St. Paul straddles two District Councils (Union Park and Macalester Groveland), both of which are seeking more engagement with college students. We aim to work with Human Resources to create work-study jobs off campus in order to incentivize participation in the District Council board and committee meetings, where student input would be important on matters of housing, transportation, sustainability, voting, and more.

Although our demographics and our Admissions goals are evolving, St. Thomas currently draws primarily from the Twin Cities, Greater Minnesota, and nearby Iowa and Wisconsin, making it relatively easy for students to vote in person in the town or city where they were raised. CEVEA aims both to better engage our residential and nearby neighborhood students in the issues of St. Paul and to encourage particularly our BIPOC students to be civically engaged in their home communities. Whether through voting, education, or activism, however, student engagement in our local community is especially pertinent given the racial reckoning that the Twin Cities metro area is undergoing, along with the growing calls for equity and inclusive policies – in housing, policing, and more – from both the Minneapolis and St. Paul City Councils.

The majority of our 55 graduate-degree programs are housed on a campus in downtown Minneapolis, which in recent years has become home to the transformational two-year Dougherty Family College. The cohort-based program prepares “historically underrepresented scholars to earn a future bachelor’s degree, get on the path to a meaningful professional career and step into their role as transformative community leaders,” according to the DFC Vision Statement. The campus recently hosted a “Black Voters Matter” seminar featuring national advocate LaTosha Brown.



SHORT-TERM GOALS

- Maintain/increase the voter registrations rates on campus, relative to 2020 when the registration rate on the St. Thomas campus was 89.1 percent.
 - Our ambitious goal aims for 90 to 95 percent registration across the student body.
- Improve St. Thomas' voter turnout rate from 82 to 90 percent:
 - Provide students with resources about the variety of ways to vote, including absentee voting, voting in another state, and voting while abroad.
 - Educate students on their nearby polling locations in St. Paul, to help voting seem easy and accessible on Election Day. Most on-campus students vote at our on-campus polling location; a portion of on-campus students and all neighborhood students vote at one of two nearby community centers or in their home communities.
 - Build cross-campus collaborations with our D1 Athletics division and other campus groups to create a Voter Ambassador leadership group.
 - Engage the Neighborhood Student Advisors to educate and engage neighborhood students – most of whom come from Twin Cities suburbs or nearby communities – on the question of whether to vote in St. Paul or in their home districts.
 - Remove barriers of transportation and inconvenience by arranging for shuttles to the two off-campus voting locations and helping students learn about and utilize Metro Transit, which has a bus line that runs to both community centers.
- Provide students with accessible ways to register to vote by utilizing technology and resources such as [TurboVote](#).
- Provide students with opportunities to participate in panel-facilitated discussions and lectures (in person and virtually) to learn about the election process.
- Work with all university social media accounts to engage students in voter registration, voter engagement, and voting for fall 2022.
- Have CEVEA engage at the beginning of fall semester with student political groups, which can host candidate visits on campus without a perception of university bias. Potential collaborations could include [College Democrats](#) and [College Republicans](#).
- Deepen ties with the nonpartisan [League of Women Voters-St. Paul](#) and [SPNN](#) to ensure that St. Thomas is a go-to place to host in-person and televised candidate forums, allowing students to learn about local issues.
- Evaluate whether a single source of outreach (a digital or printed "must read") is necessary to consistently reach students on critical issues such as voting.

GOALS

LONG-TERM GOALS

- Ensure that the St. Paul campus can be an early-voting location.
- Work with Ramsey County and our Ward 4 City Councilmember to house a second voting location on campus in St. Paul, ensuring that every residential student would have the ability and convenience to vote in person, if desired.
- Expand voter education and outreach to both the Minneapolis and St. Paul campuses, and tailor that work to better meet the diverse needs of our various student communities.
- Embed voter registration information in St. Thomas summer registration, new-student orientation, and housing move-in each September by fall 2024.
- Systematize the voter registration reminder process through university automated systems and more consistently direct students to voting resources such as those provided by St. Thomas Libraries, the Minnesota Secretary of State office (mnvotes.org), and TurboVote to engage out-of-state voters.
- Include election-related information on the university calendar.
- Further embed community/civic engagement, democratic participation, and political inclusivity in future iterations of the university's strategic plan.
- Encourage faculty to create a placeholder in their curriculum regarding civic engagement and voting.
- Secure greater university and outside funding for voter mobilization activities such as applying for CEEP Interns and Lead MN Student Voter Engagement Programs.
- Participate and place in the top 3 for the Lead MN Democracy Cup in Minnesota.
- Engage our Athletic coaches in the All IN Coaches Commitment.



- Implement the Ask Every Student project: Focus on “accessing a few minutes of focus from every student on campus,” to empower them to participate in our democracy. We intend to work closely with members of the CEVEA team and the Ask Every Student team to implement these tactics and resources, starting with the integration of voter registration into the 2022 new-student orientation.
- Engage student organizations: Meaningfully engage student organizations through initiatives such as the Tommies Vote Student Organization Challenge, student organization meeting visits, partnerships with key executive board members for select organizations, and partnerships with academic and co-curricular campus entities to further our reach.
- Expand on-campus voting: The St. Paul campus hosts a Ramsey County polling location in McNeely Hall, where most of our residential students vote. We will be working with our Ward 4 City Councilmember to relocate the nearby Groveland polling location to south campus, which would accommodate all our residential students and allow more convenient parking for neighborhood voters.
- Help students discern where to vote: Our neighborhood students, especially, tend to vote at home, because they feel better informed about hometown races such as School Board and City Council. We want to encourage all our students – residential and near neighbors alike – to become better educated about and involved in St. Paul politics, which we believe could inspire them to “vote local” and become more engaged in local political issues.
- Embed Day at the Capitol in our culture: Systematize St. Thomas’ participation in Day at the Capitol, an annual [Minnesota Private College Council](#) (MPCC) initiative during the legislative session. Meet with each year’s USG president and legislative affairs senators upon election; visit with the entire student government board in September; and ensure faculty awareness of and participation in Day at the Capitol by designating a faculty champion each fall and meeting with faculty leadership and their deans.
- Continue State Grant initiative: Build upon the university’s strong showing in the MPCC’s annual “thank you” note campaign for the Minnesota State Grant, a program that awarded more than \$8 million to 1,652 undergraduate students at St. Thomas in academic year 2020-21, with an average award of \$4,884. We could better capitalize on this already-engaged audience of students by asking them to participate in voting initiatives and Day at the Capitol.
- Promote Capitol-based civic engagement: The School of Social Work participates in its own [annual Day at the Capitol](#) each spring in conjunction with the Minnesota chapter of the National Association of Social Work. This typically involves training, information sessions, and meetings with elected officials.
- Partner with the Student Diversity and Inclusion Office to engage the Multicultural Leadership Council to develop ways of connecting with historically marginalized communities on campus to build strong civic engagement and continue to educate student leaders and club members about the importance of being Vote Ready.

- Engage with Civic Influencers: Continue to support the Campus Election Engagement Project (CEEP) fellowship program by applying for funding for two St. Thomas Civic Influencers interns. Civic Influencers interns will continue to be part of the student leadership for CEVEA and focus their work on campus-wide communications, educational programs, and community events.
- Develop lifelong advocates: Continue engagement with and growth of our Global Justice Movement through Catholic Relief Services (CRS).
 - The Global Justice Movement through CRS is a campus National and Global Changemaking student effort that engages the campus community in national advocacy. Each year students from the Global Justice Movement through CRS work on educating our campus community about issues of global hunger and migrants/refugees; these education sessions allow us to build awareness and then challenge our St. Thomas community toward action and advocacy. The Global Justice Movement through CRS runs monthly advocacy 101 workshops that educate students on the “how” of advocacy. Alongside these monthly workshops the Global Justice Movement through CRS supports the advocacy requests of CRS. Over the past two years, students from the Global Justice Movement have participated in letter-writing campaigns, official advocacy meetings with elected representatives, and advocacy for supplemental appropriations for international aid in response to COVID-19, the Global Child Thrive Act, and the Global Fragility Act.
 - St. Thomas’ students continue to support advocacy through learning, focusing on skill development and engagement with elected officials. The Global Justice Movement through CRS is a successful and impactful way for our Tommies to engage in National and Global Changemaking that advances the common good.
- Ready to Run: The University of St. Thomas College of Arts and Sciences is the exclusive Minnesota partner of Ready to Run®. Part of the Center for American Women and Politics at Rutgers University, Ready to Run® is a national network of non-partisan campaign training programs designed to encourage women to run for elective office, position themselves for appointive office, work on a campaign, or strengthen their citizenship skills. Ready to Run® Minnesota also works to encourage all of us to support the increased representation of women in politics. Research in political science shows that women officeholders increase the transparency of government action, and work to make government more inclusive and accessible. Importantly, women bring different priorities and experiences to public life, including perspectives that have been largely absent from the public policymaking process. Ready to Run® focuses on positioning oneself for office, navigating the political party structure, fundraising, media training, and the nuts and bolts of organizing a campaign, crafting a winning message, and mobilizing voters. Ready to Run® Minnesota was established in 2019 with the first all-day campaign training event planned for May 2020. Although this training was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we launched a Ready to Run® Minnesota virtual campaign training series in September 2021. Learn more [here](#).

NSLVE ENGAGEMENT

ST. THOMAS CEVEA | 15

Like many colleges, the University of St. Thomas partners with the [Institute for Democracy & Higher Education](#) (IDHE) housed at Tufts University to get data about student registration and voting rates through the NSLVE (National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement) report.

	2016			2018			2020			2016-2020	
	Enrolled	Voted	Rate	Enrolled	Voted	Rate	Enrolled	Voted	Rate	Change (p.p)	
Asian	444	257	58	482	229	48	558	369	66	↑	8
American Indian/ Alaska Native	18	14	78	26	17	65	22	15	68	↓	-10
Black	357	220	62	384	222	58	436	329	75	↑	14
Hispanic	353	237	67	422	247	59	578	421	73	↑	6
Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2 or More Races	241	187	78	229	145	63	261	214	82	↑	4
White	7,274	5,750	79	6,537	4,127	63	6,312	5,397	86	↑	6
Race Unknown	662	155	23	1,011	387	38	558	426	76	↑	53

This graph represents the NSLVE data from 2020 and looks at our student voting rate by race/ethnicity categories. The data show an increase in voting rates in almost all of the categories. We believe that partnerships with multicultural clubs and organizations that support marginalized communities have helped to increase voting rates across the board. Though work remains to be done, we are excited about the progress made thus far.

By Education Level / Undergraduate Class Year

	2016			2018			2020			2016-2020	
	Enrolled	Voted	Rate (%)	Enrolled	Voted	Rate (%)	Enrolled	Voted	Rate (%)	Change (p.p)	
EDUCATION LEVEL											
Undergraduate	5,993	4,416	74	6,014	3,383	56	6,029	4,954	82	↑	8
Graduate	3,282	2,360	72	3,016	1,953	65	2,638	2,187	83	↑	11
Class Unknown	74	44	59	61	38	62	58	30	52	↓	-8
CLASS YEAR											
First Year	1,331	73	976	1,659	56	924	1,409	81	1,146	↑	8
Second Year	1,456	74	1,079	1,415	53	746	1,436	81	1,169	↑	7
Upper Level	3,280	73	2,405	2,999	58	1,752	3,241	82	2,668	↑	9
ENROLLMENT STATUS											
Full-time	8,143	5,890	72	8,124	4,711	58	7,897	6,521	83	↑	10
Part-time	1,206	930	77	967	663	69	828	650	79	↑	1

Our efforts primarily focus on our undergraduate students as the largest group in our campus community. However, we continue also to engage in partnership with our graduate programs and professional schools to educate, engage, and get vote ready. This has manifested into gains across almost every category in the education level/undergraduate class year graph.

NSLVE ENGAGEMENT

St. Thomas was awarded a Platinum Seal from the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge for the university's strong student voter registration and participation in the 2020 presidential elections as shown in the 2020 NSLVE report. The 2020 voting rate of 82.2 percent is an improvement from the 2016 presidential voting rate of 77.3 percent, for which St. Thomas had been awarded a Gold Seal.

The university plans to channel the momentum of achieving a Platinum Seal to further improve voting rates in the Platinum Seal Range of 80 to 89 percent voting rate and work toward the Diamond Seal credential criteria of 90 to 100 percent voting rate. Closely monitoring the university's NSLVE reports will help St. Thomas to keep tabs on the voting rate in both midterm and presidential elections as the university works to more deeply engage our students in the preparation for and act of voting.



REPORTING & EVALUATION

St. Thomas works diligently to share information about voting initiatives and civic engagement with the campus community. CEVEA maintains a web presence on St. Thomas' intranet, One St. Thomas, and reports information about voter registration and turnout statistics via [select news stories](#) and different social media accounts such as [Instagram @USTChangemaking](#).

The university has also developed a [Voting and Civic Engagement research guide](#) on the library website to provide campus constituents with up-to-date information on voting and access to helpful resources.

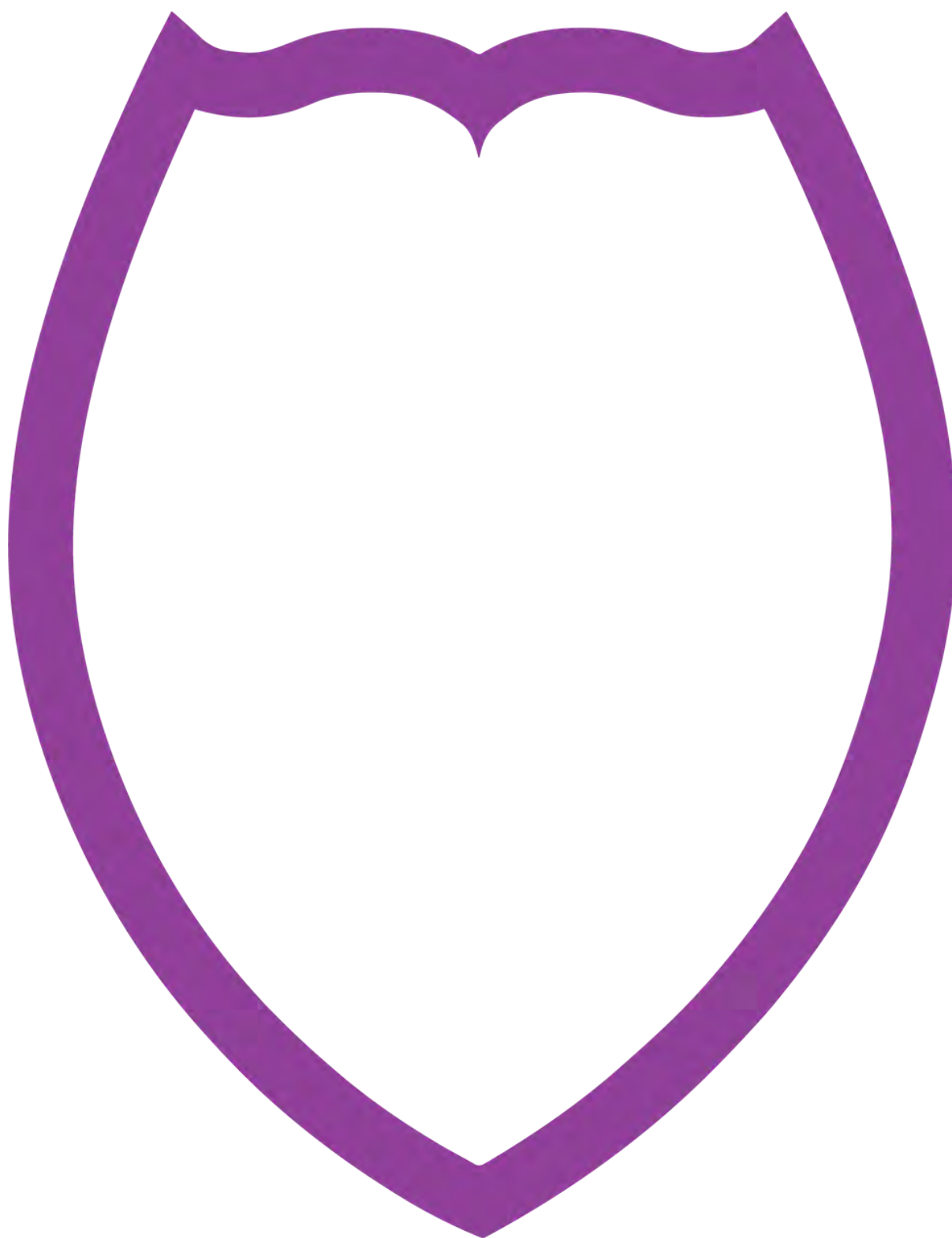
Data from the NSLVE reports will help the university to evaluate changes in voting over time to ensure that adequate – and ambitious – progress is being made. Data from NSLVE is publicly available on the [All IN Democracy Challenge](#) website and in the internal intranet One St. Thomas CEVEA website.

St. Thomas will continue to strengthen our measurements in an effort to have better evaluation processes, such as:

- Track participation in programming by utilizing [Tommie Link](#), our widely used club-management software, to scan participants' event passes.
- Provide opportunities for reflection post-events via Tommie Link.
- Incentivize participation particularly of first-year students by adding events to be part of the FYEX ([First-Year Experience](#)) program.
- Track views and clicks on websites, social media platforms, and email communications.

We plan to gather information throughout the process and adjust programming and outreach based on the data as we go along. We will also do an overall evaluation with all data after the 2022 elections, using these data – along with the information we receive in our next NSLVE report – to evaluate our success in meeting the goals set out in this plan. We will share the information gathered through the CEVEA team, reports to upper administration, social media, and university news outlets as appropriate.

We are eager to proceed!



All for the Common Good®

