

# University of Virginia's College at Wise Civic Engagement Action Plan Fall 2024

## Executive Summary

This nonpartisan democratic engagement action plan was developed by University of Virginia's College at Wise in Virginia for the 2024 election. The purpose of this action plan is to increase nonpartisan democratic engagement and student voter registration, education, and turnout in the 2024 election. The goals for University of Virginia's College at Wise for the 2024 election are: (1) hold multiple events in the fall to increase voter registration and engagement awareness and (2) increase both our student voter registration rate and our student voter turnout rate.

## Leadership

Our leadership team includes the following:

Heather K. Evans -- Director of the Experiential Learning HUB, John Morton Beaty Professor of Politics

Tabitha Smith – Interim Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs

Paul Rollins – Vice Chancellor for Administration and Chief of Staff

Beau Boggs –UVA Wise Chief of Police

Katelynn Parton – Assistant Director of Residence Life

William Rudeseal – SGA President

Layne Bush – SGA Student Representative

Christopher Davis – Director of the Convocation Center

Julie Scott – Director of the Student Center and Interim Director of Residence Life

Genna Kasun – Associate Vice Chancellor of Marketing and Communications

Our campus also works with these following nonprofit partners: Campus Compact, National Voter Registration Day, National Voter Education Week, and Up to Us.

## Commitment

In 2016, our college didn't formally organize any outreach regarding registration and participation. After the election, the college organized an open forum for processing the election and realized that many voices felt shut out of government (<https://wcyb.com/features/weekend-drive/uva-wise-community-holds-forum-on-presidential-election>).

Over the past five years, our college has taken a more deliberative effort at institutionalizing voter registration and civic engagement efforts. In the Fall of 2020, a Taskforce was assembled that addressed engaging in elections during the time of COVID. With a very generous grant from SLSV, we were able to host multiple events that were both in-person and online, and we had significant success. Our efforts were carried through year after year, and as our NSLV data show, we have had growth in the number of students registered and participating in all elections.

Heather Evans began incorporating voter registration into all of her Fall sections of Introduction to American Government beginning in the fall of 2021, and in her Spring sections, students either hold Deliberative Dialogues with the campus community or host a Gerrymandering Art Show.

This fall, the Taskforce was reassembled and includes key individuals from across grounds representing different stakeholders (faculty, administrators from student affairs, academic affairs, government relations, and students) to discuss ways that we can make our campus feel more inclusive and encourage engagement in the electoral process.

## **Landscape**

University of Virginia's College at Wise has 1,906 students (fall 2023).

Most of the students who attend our college come from Virginia and the Appalachian region, and almost half can be considered low-income as indicated by their receipt of Federal Pell Grant Aid. Half of our students are first generation. Approximately 22% of our campus community is non-white, with many of those students being very active in our athletic programs.

University of Virginia's College at Wise has authorized NSLVE.

Our institution had a 2022 campus voting rate of 36.9%

Our institution had a 2022 voter registration rate of 78.3%

Our institution had a 2020 campus voting rate of 67.1%.

Our institution had a 2020 voter registration rate of 83.2%.

Our institution had a 2018 voter turnout rate of 38%.

Our institution had a 2018 voter registration rate of 75.9%.

Our institution has been recognized by ALL IN with the following seals: 2018 Silver, 2020 Silver, 2022 Silver

## **Goals**

Our campus democratic engagement goals are:

Increase student voter turnout rate to 70% in 2024.

Increase student voter registration rate to 85% in 2024.

## **Strategy**

University of Virginia's College at Wise will implement these strategies to increase nonpartisan democratic engagement and student voter participation.

On September 10<sup>th</sup>, we will host a virtual presidential debate watch party where students will engage through X by tweeting to #cavaliervoter.

On September 17th, National Voter Registration Day, students will participate in an on-campus in-person voter registration drive that includes the option of tie-dying t-shirts, as well as picking up a pocket constitution.

On September 25<sup>th</sup>, Sanjay Suchak will visit our campus to participate in our first Civic Lecture for the fall season (which is a new initiative for our college). He will discuss his work on journalism and democracy.

On October 1<sup>st</sup>, we will host a virtual vice-presidential debate watch party where students will engage through X by tweeting to #cavaliervoter.

During the week of October 7th, National Voter Education Week, students will increase awareness on campus about the upcoming election by asking questions to their peers about the election process and giving out sodas and snacks to those who get the questions correct.

On October 14th, Thomas Bryan will visit our campus and participate in our second Civic Lecture for the fall season. He will discuss his work with the U.S. Census Bureau and redistricting and gerrymandering.

On November 5<sup>th</sup>, we will organize transportation to our local polling location. We hope to also have an election night party.

On November 6<sup>th</sup>, we will host our third and final Civic Lecture event on campus with a panel of UVA Wise faculty who will discuss "Election 2024: Where do we go from here?"

### **Evaluation**

We will evaluate the success of our programming through sign-in sheets at the events we host as well as NSLVE data regarding our registration and voter engagement rates.

### **Reporting:**

Our campus action plan will be posted on our campus page on ALL IN's website

<https://allinchallenge.org/campuses/university-of-virginias-college-at-wise/>.

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

The following individuals will have access to our NSLVE data reports:

Donna Henry, Chancellor

Scott Bevins, Associate Provost for Information Services

Heather K. Evans, John Morton Beaty Endowed Chair