



# University of Virginia's College at Wise 2022 Democratic Engagement Action Plan

Developed by: Heather Evans

## **Executive Summary:**

This nonpartisan democratic engagement action plan was developed by University of Virginia's College at Wise in Virginia 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 University of Virginia's College at Wise for the 2022 election are: (1) hold multiple events in the fall to increase voter registration and engagement awareness and (2) increase our student voter turnout rate to 40% and increase our student voter registration rate to 84%.

## **Leadership:**

Our leadership team includes the following:

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

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

## **Commitment:**

Over the past three 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. As our NSLV data show, we had growth in the number of students registered and participating in the election.

After that election season, Heather K. Evans began incorporating voter registration into all of her Fall Introduction to American Government courses, and in her Spring sections, students hold Deliberative Dialogues with the campus community. As we are in Virginia, there is never a November when an election isn't happening!

The questions we are currently addressing include things like (1) How can we encourage students to register to vote - and partner with high schools in the region, (2) How can we make sure all voices are heard and everyone is engaged in the electoral process, (3) How can we better engage communities who are less likely to vote and register, like our non-white, freshmen, and first-generation students, (4) As a college with a high proportion of economically

disadvantaged students, how can we help with the “costs” of voting (like transportation and education about the issues and candidates)?

University of Virginia's College at Wise

**Landscape:**

University of Virginia's College at Wise is a public 4-year institution and joined the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge in 2020.

Our campus demographic and voting data:

University of Virginia's College at Wise has 1,905 students. 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 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

**Goals:**

Our campus democratic engagement goals are:

Increase student voter turnout rate to 40% in 2022 and 70% in 2024.  
Increase student voter registration rate to 84% in 2022 and 90% 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 20th, 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.

During the week of October 3rd, 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 to those who get the questions correct.

On October 28th, Vote Early Day, students will increase awareness about voting early by posting signs around campus and using hashtags to engage their peers on social media.

We also want to encourage all of our students to engage in healthy deliberative dialogue with one another after the election, and will have campus (and zoom) events to do so.

**Evaluation:**

We will evaluate our action plan in the following ways:

NSLV data

**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