



University of Wisconsin- La Crosse

2021-2022 Campus Action Plan



## **Executive Summary**

This action plan was created by Campus Election Engagement Project Fellow Carson Beyer, Campus Vote Projects Democracy Fellow Abi Reiter, and Campus Votes Projects Redistricting/Democracy Fellow Matthew Gast. This action plan establishes a campus coalition dedicated to civic engagement and contains goals and strategies to get the University of Wisconsin- La Crosse student body involved and engaged in the voting process. This action plan was developed to outline our plans for the 2021-2022 academic year and establish future goals regarding institutional changes for future years. The action plan will be updated accordingly after information is received regarding the actions the Election Engagement Team is permitted to take and determine how our goals can be attainable. The Election Engagement Team will be the primary group facilitating and implementing the plan, working with coalition partners when necessary.

### **Leadership**

Campus Vote Project, Wisconsin State Coordinator- Kristin Hansen

Campus Election Engagement Project, Wisconsin Statewide Organizer- Luke Verdecchia

League of Women Voters, Board Member- Chris Haskell

Chair of the Department of Political Science and Public Administration, Regina  
Goodnow  
Professor Anthony Chergosky  
Professor Timothy Dale  
Professor Samuel Scinta  
Student Association, President and Vice President- Jared Zwettler and K.C. Cayo  
City Clerk, Nikkii Elsen  
Chief Information Officer of ITS, James Jorstad  
The Racquet Press  
Asian Student Organization  
Asian Latinx African Native American + Womxn  
Black Student Unity  
College of Business Administration Student Advisory Council  
DiSTEM- Diversity in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics  
DREAM- Disability Rights, Education, Activism, Mentoring)  
First Generation Organization  
Graduate Student Organization  
HOPE- Hmong Organization Promoting Education  
Latin American Student Organization  
Native American Student Association  
Rainbow Unity  
Students for Sustainability

## **Commitment**

There are several senior administrators that assist our election team on campus. The Director and Assistant Director of University Centers help secure materials, room reservations, and other resources available to complete our events. Previously there was a position of Civic Engagement/ Leadership Coordinator who was a direct advisor to the on-campus election engagement team. They helped secure grants, resources and prizes to dispense at events, secure booths at university events, and collaborate with community organizations. The University stresses the importance of voting closer

to elections and advertises the on-campus polling location. CLDE isn't a part of the general education curriculum, rather it is facilitated by individual professors.

## **Landscape**

### **Partnerships:**

Campus Vote Project, Wisconsin State Coordinator- Kristin Hansen

Andrew Goodman Foundation, Program Manager- Kaylee Valencia

Campus Election Engagement Project, Wisconsin Statewide Organizer- Luke Verdecchia

All In Democracy Challenge

National Voter Registration Day

Wisconsin Conservation Voters, Western Wisconsin Organizer- Abby Ross

Director of University Centers, Kyle Burke

League of Women Voters, Board Member- Chris Haskell

Student Association, President and Vice President- Jared Zwettler and K.C. Cayo

Director of Residence Life, Jenni Brundage

Community Engagement Coordinator, Lisa Klein

Chief of Police, Allen Hill

Director of Multicultural Student Services, Antoiwana Williams

Director of News and Marketing, Brad Quarberg

Assistant Vice Chancellor of Diversity and Affirmative Action, Dina Zavala

College of Science and Health Dean, Mark Sandheinrich

College of Business Administration Dean, Taggert Brooks

College of Arts, Social Sciences, and Humanities Dean, Karl Kunkel

School of Education Dean, Marcie Wycoff-Horn

Downtown La Crosse

WI 95<sup>th</sup> Assembly Representative, Jill Billings

WI 32<sup>nd</sup> Senator, Brad Pfaff

**Resources:**

We have received a \$1,000 grant from the Andrew Goodman Foundation and a \$500 grant from the Alliance for Youth Organizing that have supported our work this year. Additionally, I have received materials to dispense to the student body and community from National Voter Registration Day. Along with the League of Women Voters provided more materials and members to assist in voter registration drives.

**Institutionalization:**

On our student portal, Wings, every student has a direct link to the Wisconsin Voter ID Enrollment Verification form which can be used to verify a student's local address and their enrollment at our university when registering to vote. Additionally, our university has a webpage dedicated to voter registration and education for students ([uwlax.edu/vote](http://uwlax.edu/vote)). During on-campus events the first few weeks of classes we have registration tabling with the League of Women Voters, the events are called Sample the City, Eagle Fest, and Involvement Fest. We are also currently working towards becoming an organization on campus to reach students across demographics and get more students and faculty involved in increasing voter engagement on campus. UWL also has a polling location in our student Union that on-campus students can vote at.

**Programming:**

This past year we have had good engagement in our registration tabling alongside the League of Women Voters reaching over 200 students with voter

information and business cards with links to checking their registration status and getting over 50 students registered. During the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2021, we struggled with getting students involved in online activities since in-person events were largely discouraged but we have had several successful events on-campus in fall 2021. On National Voter Registration Day, we took over our university's Instagram account which reached more than 2,000 people and had Voter Bingo in our student Union that incorporated voter education into bingo. We also held a "Walk Your District" event with our State Representative and educated participants on the redistricting process in Wisconsin. We plan on hosting similar events in the future and look to get more involved with our city council once we become an organization, connect with our city clerk, and create more on-campus events.

### **Achievements, Challenges, and Opportunities:**

We have had significant engagement at our tabling events that were a part of the University's multiple back to school festivities. We have also established a strong relationship with our current State Assembly Representative. We also have realized that many students are not aware of issues that can lead to future barriers regarding proper representation within the state and federal government. Another issue we have identified is many off-campus students are unaware of their polling locations. Additionally, due to the University's proximity to the state border, many out-of-state students face difficulties when registering to vote.

### **Goals**

#### **Long-term:**

- Through collaboration with the faculty senate establish election day as a day without classes or have shortened classes to ensure students, faculty, and staff have the opportunity to vote.
- Voter registration expanded in new/transfer student orientation by Summer 2023 to increase initial registration rates on our campus, since according to our NSOLVE data we have a high yield. Talking with campus administration in collaborating to initially have it included in the material and then eventually have individuals present trained in registering to increase student engagement in the civic process.
- Establish an article series with the university newspaper, the Racquet, before the 2023 term to promote our get out the vote efforts, along with civic and election education.
- Establish long-term coalition on campus regarding voting and civic education to institutionalize our short-term efforts and ensure our planning and execution of our efforts are equitable. We can measure this by the amount of different partners in our coalition that regularly attend and contribute to our meetings which we believe will increase turnout and engagement across some of our lacking areas, such as Hispanic and STEM voters. We believe this is attainable and relevant because there have been efforts in the past to do this that has been a challenge due to recent administrative turnover.

**Short-term:**

Full participation and collaboration with our campus coalition, we need to solidify initial connections before we institutionalize the attendance and participation in our meetings. This would include connecting with the Racquet Press to have the avenue in place to achieve our long-term goal.

Work with the city election clerk to become poll workers and formally get certified to register voters. This is a smaller goal in making sure we have students who have the knowledge available to help during student orientation registration events.

Identify our main administrative connection on Faculty Senate

## **NSLVE**

The University of Wisconsin- La Crosse voting rate of registered students and voting rate both increased from 2016-2020. The voting rate increased by 3% and the voting rate of registered students increased by 5.1% However, the registration rate did see a 1.1% decrease. This could be due to a decrease in overall student enrollment and total number of eligible voters. The voting rate among Hispanic students saw a significant decrease of 14%. Hispanic students have had among the lowest voting rates on campus and this report confirms that continuation. There was a significant increase of non-in-person voting by 29% and early voting by 9%. While in-person voting saw a significant decrease of 18%. There was a decrease in voting among individuals age 40+. Part-time students also saw a decrease in voting by 2%. However, there was a



larger increase for graduate student by 5% while undergraduate students saw an increase of 4%. The majors with the lowest voting rates include History, Physical Sciences, and Computer and Information Sciences. Previously the lowest voting rate was seen among Business, Management, and Marketing; Biological and Biomedical Sciences; and Parks, Recreation, Leisure, and Fitness Studies. All these fields of study saw an increase of at least 3%. Therefore, our focus this upcoming year will be on increasing the engagement of students who are Hispanic, part-time, age 40+ or enrolled in physical sciences, history, computer and information science programs.

## **Strategy**

### **Long-term:**

Orientation Registration- connect with the League of Women Voters to train interns/engaged students within our coalition on how to register students in Wisconsin and Minnesota, our biggest student demographics

Election Day Off- Develop a report to propose to the Senate Faculty on researched precedents and other positive examples of election day off of classes increasing voter engagement

Racquet Press- Have interns and engaged students attend OP-ED and letter to the editor workshops to be more professional/strong in our submissions to the Racquet Press

Campus Coalition- Engage with possible campus partners listed above to sponsor and support small events together in promoting long-term collaboration

### **Short-term:**

Campus coalition- Start a Lunch & Learn initiative with organizations we want to include in our coalition

Election Clerk- Frame connection with current election clerk keeping the Spring 2022 election in mind to get our campus more connected with the community

Administrative connection- Connect with faculty close to interns and our administrative coalition

## **Reporting**

This plan will be shared with each of our confirmed partners within our campus coalition.

This plan will additionally be shared with current nonprofit partners such as, Campus Election Engagement Project, Campus Vote Project, Andrew Goodman Foundation, All In Democracy Challenge, and Wisconsin Conservation Voters. We will share our plan on our website, [www.uwlax.edu/info/vote](http://www.uwlax.edu/info/vote), for the general public to access. We will share our data, when requested, as we solidify and grow our coalition so we are all on the same initial page.

## **Evaluation**

1. **Meetings:** Meet with our coalition partners once a month, outside of our normal Election Engagement Team meetings, develop a reliable and consistent administrative connection
2. **Event Reports:** Keep a tally how many students have been registered at our events by counting the registration forms at the end of the event. Using card swipe technology at our events to get a digital report of those in attendance.

Together combine this data to compile total attendance and involvement at events.

3. **NSLVE:** We have a Sharepoint that we can put our NSLVE data in to be revisited at the beginning of every semester as we begin our event planning efforts to be sure to include the data findings in reaching the voters that haven't historically been engaged
4. **Research:** *Send out surveys first to political science and public administration as well as related fields to gather information on who wants to be more politically active and what they believe barriers to voting are that we could include in later goals and planning. We would start with the fields we are more familiar and connected with and then expand later*
5. **Continuous Evaluation:** *Review our Action Plan in the second meeting of the semester with our teams to keep our long-term goals in mind after initial meetings plannings*