

University of Wisconsin-Parkside 2022 Democratic Engagement Action Plan

Developed by: Peggy James and Debra Karp with input from Goodman Ambassadors

Executive Summary:

This nonpartisan democratic engagement action plan was developed by University of Wisconsin-Parkside in Kenosha, Wisconsin 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 Wisconsin-Parkside for the 2022 election are to

- Increase the number of students who register and vote in the 2022 Midterm Election by 15% over the previous midterms.
- Expand students' knowledge of the practice of doing democracy, and awareness of issues affected by voting
- Engage at least 30 students in September 30 event with James Carville and Mary Matalin *Thriving in Times of Political Polarization*

Leadership:

Our leadership team includes the following:

Peggy James, Dean, Collage of Social Sciences and Professional Studies
Debra Karp, Director of Community and Business Engagement
Steve Wallner, Dean of Students
Chancellor Deborah Ford

Our campus works with these following nonprofit partners: American Democracy Project, Andrew Goodman Foundation, Ask Every Student, Campus Compact as well as local organizations such as LIT (Leaders Igniting Transformation) and Voces de la Frontera.

Commitment:

UWP is a dynamic learning community grounded in academic excellence and focused on student success, diversity, inclusion and community engagement. As an Institution holding the Carnegie Classification for Community Engagement since 2006, UWP has a long-standing and strong relationship with our community; all of our voting and civic education events are open to the local community. We are also mindful of our diverse campus community- 30% are underrepresented minorities (17% Hispanic)– and emphasize voter inclusion, and issues that are representative of the needs of our student body.

The University of Wisconsin-Parkside has an active program in civic engagement, promoting volunteerism, internships and community-based learning projects. In 2006, we became part of the American Democracy Project, preparing students for active participation in the 2008 election process through cooperatives across diverse departments and community partners. Indeed, community engagement is a nationally recognized point of distinction for UW-Parkside, embedded in an institutional commitment fostering civic-minded students, alumni, staff and faculty who provide scholarship, leadership, resources and services to the local and global

community. Engagement is a hallmark of the institution as evidenced in our second Carnegie Classification in 2015, our office of Community and Business Engagement whose mission is to help prepare our students as civically-engagement professionals, and our Certificate in Community Engagement. In 2017, we adopted our [Civic Action Plan](#), with 3 goals:

1. Prepare UW Parkside graduates to be fully knowledgeable, active citizens committed to on-going engagement with the campus local and global communities;
2. Be a campus that is an active and authentic partner in improving the economic, social, political, and cultural life of its local, regional, and global communities;
3. Build and sustain a culture that appreciates, fosters, and supports a diverse inclusive campus and regional community.

The College of Social Sciences and Professional Studies is similarly geared towards civic engagement with the goal to develop society's professionals- an educated workforce based on responsible citizenship at the local, national, and global levels- and has organized the [Election Experience](#), a semester long engagement with the Presidential Election, since 2012. And, in the past years, UWP has doubled down on our commitment to equity and inclusion. Building on our history of being the most diverse UW campus in the state, we have established an [Office of Equity Diversity and Inclusion](#)

Leadership in the Election Experience at UW Parkside begins with Chancellor Ford, who signed the Presidential Commitment to the All in Challenge for Campus voter engagement and was instrumental in the establishment of UWP's relationship with the Andrew Goodman Foundation. The team is championed by Peggy James, Dean of the College of Social Sciences and Professional Studies, (james@uwp.edu), Debra Karp (karp@uwp.edu), Director of the Alan E. Guskin Center for Community and Business Engagement. AGF ambassadors represent the core of the team: Sherry Shen, Kennise Perry, Grant Pitts, and Vanessa Reynoso. AGF ambassadors begin work prior to the Fall semester, and have contributed to the development of this action plan. AGF ambassadors are liaisons between the team and campus partners, including student organizations (e.g. Black Student Union, Latinos Unidos, Habitat for Humanity), campus athletes, and campus units including the Parkside Library and Student Services. Our ambassadors have reached out to VoteRiders and engaged with representatives from Progressive Voter Turnout to discuss partnerships on campus.

Faculty who teach our Community Based Learning courses engage in professional development that helps them to embed teaching of civic and social issues in their courses. Our general education program, required for all undergraduate students, has as one of its goals social and personal responsibility. Our commitment to civic engagement is demonstrated through our campus [civic engagement plan](#) that pledges:

- We empower our students, faculty, staff, and community partners to co-create mutually respectful partnerships in pursuit of a just, equitable, and sustainable future for communities beyond the campus— nearby and around the world.
- We prepare our students for lives of engaged citizenship, with the motivation and capacity to deliberate, act, and lead in pursuit of the public good.
- We embrace our responsibilities as place-based institutions, contributing to the health and strength of our communities—economically, socially, environmentally, educationally, and politically.
- We harness the capacity of our institutions—through research, teaching, partnerships, and institutional practice—to challenge the prevailing social and economic inequalities that threaten our democratic future.

- We foster an environment that consistently affirms the centrality of the public purposes of higher education by setting high expectations for members of the campus community to contribute to their achievement.

University of Wisconsin-Parkside has been a signatory to the Higher Education Presidents' Commitment to Full Student Voter Participation since 2020.

Landscape:

University of Wisconsin-Parkside is a public 4-year institution and joined the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge in 2016.

Our campus demographic data: University of Wisconsin-Parkside has 4,143 students, of which approximately 75% are undergraduates. The average age of full-time undergraduate students is 22 years old. 21 percent of undergraduate students are 25 years and older. Approximately 60% of students are first generation college students. Females comprise 55% of students. 89% of first-time, first-year degree-seeking freshmen live in Wisconsin.

Breakdown of student ethnicity:

- White: 63.5%
- Hispanic: 17.4%
- African American: 7.4%
- Asian: 3.2%
- American Indian or Alaskan Native: 0.3%
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander: 0.1%
- International: 2.6%
- Two or more race/ethnicities, non-Hispanic: 4.9%
- Total Underrepresented Minority: 29.1%

Voting Data:

University of Wisconsin-Parkside has authorized NSLVE.

Our institution had a 2020 campus voting rate of 58%.

Our institution had a 2020 voter registration rate of 68.1%.

Our institution had a 2018 voter turnout rate of 45.1%.

Our institution had a 2018 voter registration rate of 65.3%.

Our institution has been recognized by ALL IN with the following seals: 2016 Bronze, 2018 Platinum, 2020 Bronze. NSLVE reports that UWP student voting on campus increased significantly in the 2020 presidential election, rising to 58% in 2020 from a rate of 53% in 2016. Of the students on campus, 68% registered to vote, and 85% of these students voted, resulting in a voting rate of nearly 20 percentage points above the national average. Midterm voting increased by 18% in 2018 from 2014. In 2020, election participation rates of African American and Hispanic students at UWP increased by 7% and 6% respectively. With this increase, we have begun to close the equity gap in voting that exists between non-white and white populations.

Goals:

Our campus democratic engagement goals are:

1. Increase student voter turnout rate to 70% in 2022 and 90% in 2024.
2. Increase student voter registration rate to 70% in 2022 and 75% in 2024.

Election Engagement and Civic Education Long Term Goals

	Specific	Measurable	Attainable	Relevant	Time-Bound	Inclusive	Equitable
Campus Population Inclusive Voting	Voting rates achieve 70%, 90% in midterm and presidential elections	Voting rates provided by NSLVE, breakdown by racial, ethnic group	Given increases in recent years, yes	UWP has an increasingly diverse population that should be represented	Progress is measured at each election year	Voting message tailored to groups as needed	Voting reflects percentage of group
Become a consistent NSLVE platinum campus	Platinum status is the highest level of participation set by the ALL IN CHALLENGE	Uses the voter participation numbers from NSLVE	UWP has achieved two bronze rankings (Pres) and one platinum ranking (mid)	Related to our civic action plan	Progress is measured at each election year	In order for us to attain this status, we must be inclusive to our campus community	Given the local characteristic of midterm elections, we will focus on this status for the midterms
Institutional funding commitment for sustainability	Part time position	Funding provided	Yes, but may be less than 50%, or may be placed within an existing position	The mission of UWP is consistent with an institutional resource such as this	Objective should be achieved within two years	This position should be housed within the Center for Community & Business Engagement	Target populations of position should be dependent upon student demographics

Strategy:

University of Wisconsin-Parkside will implement these strategies to increase nonpartisan democratic engagement and student voter participation.

Our short-term goals are to increase voter participation and to increase civic awareness (with applied opportunities). Our strategy is founded on the belief that opportunities and awareness are key to civic engagement, thus our activities include multiple opportunities for voter registration, and election awareness. The AGF ambassadors serve as the primary agents of implementation with assistance from the campus champions. Additionally, the ambassadors realize the importance of networking, and have already begun the process of connecting groups to the civic engagement process.

Short Term:

Provide multiple opportunities in multiple venues for voter information and registration (this includes f2f, online learning platform, social media, and campus media)

Ensure that new students are introduced to the campus culture of civic engagement (targeting introductory general education courses)

Widen the area of influence by connecting with student groups and campus organizations.

Create an inclusive atmosphere of civic engagement on campus

Assess civic engagement and knowledge via quizzes and surveys

EVENT	FREQUENCY	ENGAGED	PRIMARY FUNCTION	TYPE
Parkside Involvement Fair Table	Once per year, 9/7/22	50-100	Share voting information and register people to vote	Event
National Voter Registration Day Tent, table and cookie give-away	Tuesday, 9/20/22 10 AM-4 PM	300+	Register voters Promote on window in Student Center Social media	Event
Vote Early Day—Parkside Picks Pumpkins and Politicians, table, pumpkin give-away	October 19, 10 AM-3PM	300+	Last day for on-line registrations Create and sustain momentum Window in Student Center Social media	Event
GOTV/Election Day Celebration, Ice cream for voters and those who pledge to vote	11-1 PM	50-100	Increase active citizenship and encourage same-day voting Social media	Event
GOTV--Voter registration Tabling on bridge Presentations at campus organization meetings	Once per week for 2-3 hours—late September-First week of November	100+	Info on registration and voting, facilitation of registration (before October 19) Provide info on same-day registration after Oct 19	Action/Meetings
GOTV Presentations Student organizations First Year Students TRIO Gen Ed Courses First Year Seminars CBL Courses	One visit to each first-year course Visit at least five campus organizations	350	Education on how/where to register and vote	Meeting
GOTV and registration Residence Halls	Meet with RAs to give them information to share with residents	650	Education on how/where to register and vote	Action
Campus voting survey (straw poll) conducted on-line and promoted in classes and tabling events	1/ prior to election-present results after election	300+	Increase campus awareness of voting behaviour and political perspectives	Action
Educational presentations	2	250-500	Increase knowledge of political process and political issues	Action
Morning After Presentation- Use straw poll data to compare how Parkside voted to statewide numbers	November 9, noon-1 PM in Student Center	25-30	Increase awareness of voting results both among Parkside student an	Event

Long term:

Two of our long-term goals involve increasing civic participation. As we work toward increased participation in the election, we will seek out opportunities to meet and work with campus groups that reflect our diversity, such as the Black Student Union, Latinos Unidos, the Parkside Asian Organization. Being visible to the Office of Multicultural Students will assist in connecting their activities to the voting process.

Our second long-term goal- to achieve high participation on campus and then to sustain it. The spring semester is the time to highlight that civic engagement goes far beyond voting- that there is a continuous responsibility to engage. Our strategy for spring is to directly use the information gained in the fall to provide meaningful opportunities for students to engage beyond the election. Civic education activities will always include an applied aspect that will facilitate moving beyond the information, and engaging in action steps

Institutionalization takes time. Activities beyond voting need to be monitored; ideally this strategy would not stop in Fall 2023. It would continue, and be more directly tied to voting.

Our current Goodman Ambassadors are enthusiastic about working toward UW Parkside becoming a polling site, making Parkside ID voter ID friendly and designing a campaign to make election day an academic holiday. They will be researching and developing strategies to achieve these objectives in spring semester, 2023. These objectives will contribute to increasing student voter engagement.

Our goals require long term strategies to provide not only high numbers of participation, but consistency in those numbers. The first goal is to be achieved this semester—a high participation rate. The strategy for the second goal is to build a culture of civic engagement that connects the elections. A parallel strategy to institutionalize this engagement is to work with administration in recognizing the importance of civic engagement for a diverse population.

Resources

UWP is very thankful to receive support from the Andrew Goodman Foundation to support the work of our ambassadors on campus. CSSPS and CCBE have limited financial resources that are available to assist. Volunteers provide the human capital needed to run events and registration/voting drives. However, a significant resource that is lacking is a consistent and permanent position on campus to lead students and staff in registration, voter education and voting. Campus champions do this activity (willingly) in addition to regular duties; we believe that an institutional commitment to an office or position would help civic engagement on campus. However, the campus budget situation mirrors the national one, and it is unlikely that we will be able to make progress in obtaining this resource commitment.

Programming

Participation in the national events for voting (Voter Registration Day, Early voting, etc.) provide good and effective milestones in organizing registration and voting awareness events. Linking registration and voting awareness events with ‘fun’ activities such as cookie and pumpkin give-aways has been not only popular but also provides visual reminders of the upcoming election and the need to be prepared to vote. Prior to COVID, debate watch parties on campus (with pizza) were successful; the online versions were poor substitutes on our campus. Surge tactics are effective; in the past we have provided buttons at each event, and it was not uncommon to see students with multiple buttons on their backpacks, thus advertising engagement!

Achievements, Challenges, and Opportunities

Our NSLVE reports demonstrate consistent progress in both registration and voting. Still, there is room for greater progress in this area, especially in midterm elections. We increasingly take note of the need to encourage inclusivity in the voting process; we made progress in the presidential elections, and are looking to continue that trend in the midterms. We believe that the diverse nature of our AGF team is a resource that will help us address this challenge. One challenge that we share with the nation is the increasing polarization in political perspectives. AGF ambassadors can meet this challenge with discussions, whether one on one or in groups, and bringing the message of AGF to the campus.

Evaluation:

We will evaluate our action plan in the following ways:

In addition to using future NSLVE data, we will evaluate our campus democratic engagement programming in the following ways:

- Numbers of students registered to vote at our events
- Numbers attending programs and events
- Numbers of students reached in class and organization presentations
- Numbers of students participating in surveys
- Numbers of applicants to the Goodman Ambassadors program (hired in Spring for following academic year.)
- Achievement of academic holiday on Election Day at Parkside

Reporting:

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

<https://allinchallenge.org/campuses/university-of-wisconsin-parkside/>. Our institution has given ALL IN permission to publish our NSLVE reports which are posted on our campus page on ALL IN's website.

Our campus action plan and NSLVE reports will be posted on our Civic Action Plan web page and on the Andrew Goodman [website](#) as well as with campus partners including the Office of Equity Diversity and Inclusion Links will be shared with the campus on Midnight Ranger (students), Wednesday Weekly (faculty and staff). Goodman Ambassadors/Champions will present their work to selected groups of campus leadership. UWP provides access to recent NSLVE reports on its Election experience Website. Upon receipt of the results, they are shared with campus leaders and a press release is routinely prepared. NSLVE results are shared in new student orientations.