

2022-2023

University of Wisconsin-Superior's Voter & Civic Engagement Action Plan

Prepared for ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge, Voter Friendly Campus, & Campus Vote Project

Jackets Vote | The Link Center



Executive Summary

The Voter & Civic Engagement Action Plan was developed by the University of Wisconsin-Superior's Link Center's [Jackets Vote](#) Team and their partners. This action plan was developed to build on the nonpartisan, singular, cross-institution effort that was begun by the team in 2020. The plan will detail leadership and coalition strategies to provide the resources and support needed by students for civic learning, political engagement, and voter participation. This action plan seeks to achieve a higher voter registration rate among students, provide the necessary resources and tools for student voter education, and ultimately produce a higher voter turnout rate throughout our institution. This plan ties into broader institutional values of civic action and positive change within the community. This action plan will be applicable for the entire 2022-2023 academic school year. The plan will be implemented by the Jackets Vote team through a variety of student and community focused events, programs, presentations, and trainings.

Leadership Coalition

The Link Center's Jackets Vote Team

Jenice Meyer – Senior Strategic Partnerships Officer; Director of The Link Center
Katelyn Baumann | Outreach Program Manager
Claire Stangle | Outreach Specialist
Heidi Schaaf | Outreach Specialist
Student | Community and Voter Engagement Intern
Student | Community and Voter Engagement Intern

Internal Coalition

Dr. Renée Wachter | Chancellor
Dr. Maria Cuzzo | Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs
Harry Anderson | Associate Vice Chancellor
Dr. Nicholas Danz | Dean of Academic Affairs
Jen Bird | Assistant Dean of Students
Allison Garver | Student Affairs Director
Sarah Libbon | Communications Manager
Jordan Milan | Senior Communications Officer
Heidi Bergeron | Marketing Manager
Nicholas Bursick | Athletics Director
Sarah Bourcy | Chartwells Catering
Academic Department Chairs & Program Coordinators
Faculty/Instructional Staff
Athletics Department
Student Organizations
The Promethean
Department of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion
Student Government Association
Public Leadership & Innovation Planning Committee

External Coalition

Camila Ramos | Superior, WI City Clerk
Kelly Cohen | Administrative Assistant for the Superior School District
Kristen Hansen | Wisconsin Coordinator for Campus Vote Project
Sue Sandvick | Douglas County Clerk
All IN Campus Democracy Challenge
Ask Every Student
Campus Takeover Team; Students Learn Students Vote
League of Women Voters
Menard Center for the Study of Institutions and Innovation
National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE)
National Voter Education Week
National Voter Registration Day
Vote Early Day
Voter Friendly Campus; Campus Vote Project
Wisconsin Institute for Public Policy and Service (WIPPS)

Commitment

In the Fall of 2018, our institution created a [Civic Action Plan](#) to continue our commitment to community engagement as specified in our mission statement, along with declaring our shared commitment to the public purpose of higher education. These efforts were initiated by Campus Compact; UW-Superior's Chancellor Renee Watcher committed the university to develop a civic action plan with a multidisciplinary team. The eventual Civic Action Plan was endorsed by all four of UW-Superior's governance groups including Faculty Senate, Academic Staff Senate, University Staff Senate, and Student Government Association. It was then published for students, staff, faculty, and community members to review.

Within the Civic Action Plan there are multiple action items and outcomes related to voter engagement and civil liberties.

Goal 1: Student Learning

Strategy 1.A: Student Learning

1.A.2 - By 2020, develop a plan to increase opportunities for civic education and engagement to ensure students are equipped with an understanding of democratic principles and the dispositions necessary to discuss social, political or ethical issues.

Strategy 1.B: Meaningful Experiences

1.B.4 - By 2025, increase student election engagement: education, registration and Get Out the Vote Efforts.

In addition, our institution has had a long-standing [Student Learning Goal](#) of individual and social responsibility, which includes students being able to demonstrate informed civic engagement.

In the past, efforts towards achieving these specific goals have been the focus of political science and legal studies programs, especially within their [Academic Service-Learning \(AS-L\)](#) projects and respective student organizations. These organizations include Political Science Association, Pre-Law Society, and Student Government Association. Because these efforts only reach select student populations, the Jackets Vote team has initiated programming strategies to reach all students within all programs. This effort is being communicated across campus via email, informational tabling events, and presentations that focus on opportunities for democratic engagement and collaboration specific to each group. For our external coalition members, email exchanges, digital meetings, as well as in-person meetings and events have strengthened standing partnerships and created new connections that can be further built on in the coming year.

Landscape

Civic learning and voter engagement are overall priorities for the institution. This is stated within both our institution's Civic Action Plan and Student Learning Goals. More specifically, within our Civic Action Plan under Meaningful Experiences, it states that the goal for 2025 is to "increase student election engagement." This includes increased voter registration, education, and overall voter turnout.

The University of Wisconsin-Superior's (UWS) 2018 mid-term National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) data shows that 73.6% of eligible individuals were registered to vote, which was under the national average of approximately 75%. The data also showed that 63.9% of students who registered to vote, did in fact vote. The overall campus voting rate for 2018 was 47.9%, which was higher than the voting rate for all institutions in 2018 which was 39.1%. The goal for this next mid-term election is to increase our percentages 5% by focusing on voter education and get out the vote efforts in September and October that build on the foundational work that Jackets Vote has done in '21-22.

While funding and leadership has proven to be an internal barrier for our institution, there are several external barriers that challenge voter engagement efforts. One such barrier includes the voting ID laws within Wisconsin which are complex and confusing, especially for out-of-state students looking to register and vote locally. There is no current way to register out-of-state students online, since they do not have a Wisconsin DMV-issued form of ID. These students need to fill out paper forms and submit them at the City Clerk's office off campus. They also need to provide proof of residence, which is accessed through official school channels if they live on-campus, in a residence hall. If an out-of-state student lives off-campus, they must register in-person for Wisconsin elections because they do not have a Wisconsin DMV-issued ID. Their options for proof of residence then include a utility bill, lease, bank statement, etc., which may be challenging for students that do not have their name assigned to their lease or utilities and have banking mail sent to their permanent address. Another external barrier to voter

engagement efforts for our intuition is polling location. There are two separate locations assigned to students living on campus based on the location of their residence hall. Students who live in the residence halls that are located closest to Belknap Avenue, vote at a polling place located within walking distance. Students who live in the residence halls at the southern end of campus vote at a different location that is not accessible by walking. While they are all considered to be living on one campus, they must vote at different locations. This is confusing for students and creates an added barrier for students who do not have a means of transportation off-campus. The variety of legal and logistical barriers UWS students face can discourage them from undertaking a taxing process that may seem to have low personal payoff.

The current resource to help with external and internal barriers is a gift that our institution received from the Menard Center for the Study of Institutions and Innovations at UW-Stout, which is designed to fund nonpartisan civic engagement, voter registration, and civil liberties programs. This gift has helped fund two student intern positions with a working budget to take lead in voter engagement efforts for the institution. Having this leadership alleviates the barrier of sparse, individualized efforts by creating a cohesive, cross-institution initiative. Another way this funding and leadership will help alleviate barriers is by creating a coalition of partners capable of addressing the variety of barriers faced by UWS voters. One coalition member our institution has partnered with is the City Clerk's Office, who has aided in voter engagement efforts in the past. They can assist with getting students registered to vote, thus alleviating the external barrier of complex Wisconsin voter ID laws. Our internal coalition will be key in coordinating efforts between Jackets Vote and UWS to provide resources and tools for students to become registered, educated, and turned out to vote.

Goals

The short-term goals for the 2022 midterm election include having a voter registration rate of 78.6%, a voting rate of registered students at 68.9%, and an overall voting rate of 52.9%. In addition to voter participation, we will work to increase student involvement in local political processes through partnerships and projects with local nonpartisan offices and organizations. An example of this would be working with the City Clerk's office to train students as poll workers, election observers, and assistants for central count. These goals will be achieved through the planned initiatives and activities listed in the Strategy section. The interns will track student engagement at each Jackets Votes program to determine whether they have met the goal of increasing student interactions by 20% in comparison to the number of '21-22 interactions (555). After the midterm elections in November 2022, Jackets Vote will review voter participation using the NSLVE data to evaluate the effectiveness of the voter and community engagement programming.

Long-term goals for our institution include increasing student election engagement, creating a civil liberties informational website, utilizing the UWS learning platform, Canvas, to provide a voting essentials course for students, and instituting a civics course as a university studies course that is required for graduation. These institutional goals are ongoing and at differing stages of development. Increasing student election engagement in '22-23 will include novel programming ideas and comparison of GOTV strategies across multiple years to assess

their strengths. Established in 2020, the Jackets Vote website will be updated to include coordinated resources and information for the 2022 midterm cycle. Additionally, Jackets Vote will work with UWS Technology Services and Center for Leadership Innovation and Collaboration to redesign the Canvas course that will appear in all UWS students Canvas portals with updated information for the 2022 elections. A Public Leadership and Innovation major has been established

Strategy Timeline

The following strategies and goals for voter engagement for the 2022 midterm election will be broken up into the upcoming months, with each month representing a new focus for our efforts.

July Goal: Research/Plan Action Plan

- Review Action Plan created by student interns in Spring 2022
 - Decide what elements will be implemented in coming year
 - Add any additional goals or strategies
 - Post Action Plan so everyone has access to it
- Interns should spend time reviewing NSLVE data, election dates, and voting laws in MN and WI so that they can be a resource to students, volunteers, and faculty
 - Importance of voter registration- take note of registration deadlines, differences between states
 - Importance of midterm elections
 - Learn about the local and state races taking place
 - Understand and be ready to share the importance of voting
- July 18: Attend SOAR (Summer Orientation, Advisement and Registration)
 - Daylong event required for all freshmen and transfer students coming in with 21 or fewer post high school credits
 - Get new students registered to vote- tabling at residence halls, at the Yellowjacket Union, or at fall semester welcome events
 - Share the Jackets Vote link and encourage incoming students to register to vote

August Goal: Plan/Execute Action Plan

- August 8: Attend SOAR
 - Get new students registered to vote- tabling at residence halls, at Yellowjacket Union, or at Fall welcome events
 - Share the Jackets Vote link and encourage incoming students to register to vote
- Plan Social Media Campaign
 - Begin to work with Student Athletic Advisory Committee and Student organizations to identify possible student influencers
 - Preset posts to be released at least once a week
 - Have posts prepared 2-4 weeks in advance to avoid getting behind when school begins

- Engage with other organizations by commenting or sharing at least once a week to increase visibility
- Form coalitions that can adapt and grow
 - Reach out to both internal and external contacts to introduce the new interns
 - Discuss how they can help Jackets Vote, and how Jackets Vote can support them
 - See who wants to be updated weekly versus who will be updated with our monthly goals/outline of activities
- Contact instructors with options on how they can talk about Jackets Vote in class
 - Minimum of mentioning our website and placing a link in their syllabi
 - Offer to come to class to perform a walkthrough of the resources/tools available
- Work with Technology Services and the Center for Leadership Innovation and Collaboration to update our webpage with most relevant resources and information for midterm election.

September Goal: Student Registration/Education

- September 3 & 4: Weekend of Welcome
 - Get new students registered to vote- tabling at residence halls, at Yellowjacket Union, or at welcome events
 - Share the Jackets Vote link and encourage incoming students to register to vote
 - Have leaders instruct their students to go on the website as part of their move-in checklist
- Civil liberties speaker event for UWS/Superior community
 - Partner with Wisconsin Institute for Public Policy and Service to promote
- Coordinate efforts to register students living in Residence Halls
 - Multiple mailings/post card reminders
 - Proof of residency sent to students
 - Emails to residents
 - Evening events with RAs
 - Flyers about voting and polling places
- Provide Free Speech/Civic Discourse Trainings for UW-Superior students and staff
 - Practical skills and practice in holding civil discourse on difficult or controversial topics
 - Professional development for students, faculty and staff
 - Support understandings of diversity of perspective, effective conflict resolution and organizing public dialogues
- September 20: National Voter Registration Day
 - Tabling event at Yellowjacket Union
 - Collaborate with Superior City Clerk's office (Camila Ramos)
 - Fun event/information session about becoming an election observer, election inspector and helping with the central count
 - Collaborate with Campus Takeover and CivicHolidays.org for content and messaging ideas
 - Attend Jackets Fest

- Introduce interns to various student leaders and share out ideas for collaboration with student organizations through partnership with Student Activities
 - Share the Jackets Vote link and encourage students to register to vote
- Create both in-person and virtual presentations about the importance of voter registration, getting registered and signing up for election notifications/pledging to vote
 - Pitch to classes, teams, and student organizations
 - Create targeted messaging and presentations for academic majors with lowest voting rates: Computer & information sciences; Law enforcement, firefighting, and protections; Legal professions and studies
- Continue to post on social media about voter registration
 - Get as many students to follow and share posts to gain as much of a following as possible by engaging with other teams/organizations
- Identify voting barriers for UW-S students and plan ways to fill gaps that might prevent students from participating
 - To start understanding barriers: listen to what students are saying about voting at registration events

October Goal: Education/Voters as Advocates

- Host regional nonpartisan candidate forum at UWS
 - In partner with local city and county clerk's office and Wisconsin Public Radio (WPR)
 - Increase understanding of issues and candidate positions in upcoming election
- Provide Free Speech/Civic Discourse Trainings for UW-Superior students and staff
 - practical skills and practice in holding civil discourse on difficult or controversial topics
 - professional development for students, faculty and staff
 - support understandings of diversity of perspective, effective conflict resolution and organizing public dialogues
- Encourage early preparation for Election Day
 - Have the UW-Superior Chancellor email students a reminder about important dates
 - Work with Technology Services/Marketing & Communication to get voting information on the general University log in page
 - Collaborate with Canvas Administrator on sending global messages to all Canvas users about voting
- October 3-7: National Voter Education Week
 - Tabling events at multiple locations
 - Become a partner to be given access to talking points, toolkits, webinars, etc.
 - Post student influencer messages on social media encouraging voting
 - Encourage use of Snapchat filter to express support for voting
 - Collaborate with Campus Takeover and CivicHolidays.org
- Film Screening with Alison Wielgus/Communicating Arts Department

- Deliver in-person and virtual presentations about the importance of voter registration, getting registered and signing up for election notifications/pledging to vote
 - Pitch to classes, teams, and student organizations
 - Deliver targeted messaging and presentations for academic majors with lowest voting rates: Computer & information sciences; Law enforcement, firefighting, and protections; Legal professions and studies
- October 18: General Election Registration Deadline for Minnesota
- October 19: General Election Registration Deadline for Wisconsin (online or postmark date)
- Collaborate with City Clerk office to facilitate student registrations
 - After online registration is past, inform students who have not yet registered that they can register with their student IDs by paper to be dropped off (by us) to the City Clerk's office
- Continue to update social media, website, and email reminders
 - Post sample ballot items
 - Post candidate and race information
 - Post reminders about registration and absentee/standard voting deadlines
 - All campus emails from the Chancellor; and further marketing and promotional strategies to remind students, faculty, and staff of the upcoming election and tips on making a GOTV plan
- October 28: National Vote Early Day – Host Campus Halloween party
 - Coordinate with EDI department
 - Portion of the costume contest dedicated to a democratic theme
 - Pro-voting photobooth that will utilize the materials created for the social media campaign
 - Distance learning/online students will also be invited to participate by submitting pictures of their best civic and voter engagement related Halloween costumes
 - Collaborate with Campus Takeover and CivicHolidays.org

November Goal: Voter Turnout

- October 31- November 7: Week before election: Highly visible events promoting voting
 - Strong social media presence emphasizing student influencers and use of GOTV Snapchat filters
 - Invite Buzz the mascot
 - Voter trivia event with Halloween theme on Monday 10/31
 - Tabling with sample ballots, shuttle information
- November 4: In-Person Registration Deadline for General Election for Wisconsin
- November 7: Election Hero Day
 - Use materials from Civicholidays.org to celebrate efforts of election officials and poll workers
 - Social media highlight of any UWS students serving as poll workers
- November 8: Election Day
 - Organize a shuttle service for those who are voting in person on Election Day
 - Work with faculty for excused absences for those voting in person

- Open house at Link Center with snacks

December Goal: Program Evaluation/Assess Action Plan

- Post-Election Goal: Assessment
 - Create a student survey to measure effectiveness of differing aspects of the Jackets Vote program
 - Ask students whether they voted, how, and about potential barriers
 - Perform these surveys in-person and online
 - Will create the framework for future action Plans

January Goal: National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) data review

- Assess data and determine the story it tells
- Create page on Jackets Vote website and in student Canvas portal to display voting data
- Use NSLVE and survey data to assess Jackets Vote programming

February-May: Continued Civic Engagement

- Plan and enact programming for community on broader civic or democratic engagement topics
- Students attend Superior Days in February
 - student interns recruit other students from the Student Government Association, student organizations and/or political science and legal studies programs to learn about governance firsthand
 - A few professional staff will be included to ensure supervision and reflection of the activities occur
- Two civil liberties speaker events for UWS/Superior community
 - Partner with Wisconsin Institute for Public Policy and Service to promote
 - One event in March, one event in April

National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE)

2018 NSLVE Data

Registration Rate: 73.6%
Voting Rate of Registered Students: 63.9%
Voting Rate: 47.9% (above national average)
18-21-year-olds: 35%
22-24-year-olds: 36.0%
25-29-year-olds: 41%
30-39-year-olds: 61%
40-49-year-olds: 65%
50+ year-olds: 71%

2020 NSLVE Data

Registration Rate: 78.8%
Voting Rate of Registered Students: 82.5%
Voting Rate: 65% (national average 66%)
18-21-year-olds: 55%
22-24-year-olds: 55%
25-29-year-olds: 60%
30-39-year-olds: 70%
40-49-year-olds: 80%
50+ year-olds: 83%

2022 NSLVE Goals

Registration Rate: 77%
Voting Rate of Registered Students: 70%
Voting Rate: 52.9%
18-21-year-olds: 40%
22-24-year-olds: 42%
25-29-year-olds: 45%
30-39-year-olds: 65%
40-49-year-olds: 70%
50+ year-olds: 75%

Reporting

The Jackets Vote Team worked closely with the institution's Technology Services, and Marketing and Communications departments along with a web designer to create a Jackets Vote website in 2020. The Jackets Vote website includes links to register to vote in Wisconsin and Minnesota, a link to Campus Vote Project's State Student Voting Guides, links to voting information for Wisconsin and Minnesota, an event calendar, and information on the Jackets Vote team. The website continues to be updated with the latest information as the team sees fit and serves as a resource for student and community voter engagement. UWS reports initiatives,

policies, data, and the Forward Superior Strategic Plan to the community via the university website.

The Link Center's Jackets Vote Team also plans to build a social media presence. The team currently has a Facebook and plans to create an Instagram and a Twitter account. On these accounts the team will share voter information, reminders to vote, reminders about Link Center events, and other information relating to voting and general civil liberties.

The Jackets Vote Team will also bring back the Jackets Vote Canvas page for the fall semester of 2022. Canvas is the university's online learning platform that all students online and in-person use to access their classwork. The page will include things such as: voter registration links, information on polling places, information on Jackets Vote events, contact information for the Jackets Vote Team and the Superior City Clerk's Office, and informational modules on voter education, rights, etc.

Evaluation

The purpose of evaluation at the conclusion of this midterm election season is to assess the effectiveness of the Jackets Vote voter education and mobilization efforts. We will analyze our different programs to assess which had the greatest student engagement as well as measurable outcomes indicated by registration and voting data reported in the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) report. Comparing the results of these different resources will show which strategies were most effective in reaching UW-Superior students. This will help the Jackets Vote team learn which methods should be continued to be used in future election cycles.

Further data can be pulled from the Institutional Research Office to get a better understanding of how our efforts reached and affected students and how they were utilized by faculty, instructors, and other staff members. Given the university's initiative to increase online majors, it will be important to see if our efforts were being noticed by students using online modalities. The Institutional Research Office can help The Link Center to create a survey to get feedback from the students. The survey will measure student attitudes and perceptions regarding democratic engagement and the Jackets Vote programs.

These evaluations will be carried out once the 2022 election season has ended and NSLVE reports from Tufts University are in. Once all evaluations have been completed, a follow-up report can be posted onto the Jackets Vote website for all to review. Such a report would provide advice for future efforts on what worked well, and which barriers may have reduced the effectiveness of programming.