

ALL IN Challenge Action Plan 2020

Executive Summary

This action plan was developed by the WellesleyVotes Working Group lead by Tara Murphy, Chief Communications Officer. It details Wellesley's plan for the 2020 U.S. election cycle to increase civic participation and voter engagement. The strategy bridges academic and extra-curricular work happening across Wellesley and centers student voices as the next generation of civic leaders. The plan will be implemented between January 2020 and January 2021.

Leadership

The Working Group spans senior leadership, academic departments, student services, and students organizations making a truly campus-wide initiative. It includes:

- President's Office
- Communications & Public Affairs
- Career Education + Civic Engagement
- Dean of Students
- Provost
- Student Organizations
 - Wellesley CG (College Government)
 - CPLA (Committee for Political and Legislative Awareness)
 - Ministrare Council
 - Wellesley Democrats
 - Wellesley Republicans
- Key faculty in the following areas:
 - The Knapp Social Science Center
 - Political Science Department
 - Women's and Gender Studies Department
 - Harambee House
 - PPLA (Project on Public Leadership and Action)
 - The Freedom Project
 - The Newhouse Center for the Humanities

Commitment

Wellesley has a longstanding institutional commitment to civic participation. The institution was founded on the ideals that educating women is a moral imperative. Wellesley students and alumnae have often been on the front lines of social movements from suffrage 100 years ago to the Movement for Black Lives this summer, and the hundreds of movements in between in pursuit of the ideal of a “more perfect union.”

Wellesley's mission to “educate women who will make a difference in a world” is at the heart of our WellesleyVotes Action Plan. Women, and in particular women of color, have been the backbone of every democratic even when the rights secured were not extended to them. Civic

engagement and participation is also included in Wellesley's upcoming strategic plan and is part of the institution's goals over the next five years.

Landscape

In 2016 a Wellesley alumna was on the top of the ballot as the first woman nominated by a major party to run for President of the United States. Enthusiasm and interest in the election swelled on campus and in the alumnae community. Two years ago, 52.3 percent of eligible Wellesley students voted in the U.S. midterm elections, a 35.9 percent increase over the 2014 midterms, according to a report from the [Institute for Democracy & Higher Education \(IDHE\)](#) at Tufts University's Tisch College of Civic Life.

As President Paula Johnson shared in message to the community, "On the one hand, this is cause for celebration as it marks a substantial boost over 2014 and places Wellesley students far above the campus average of 39.1 percent. Wellesley can and must do better." In a representative democracy we all have a role to play. Wellesley already has several actively engaged groups from which to expand our civic work.

The Committee for Political and Legislative Awareness (CPLA), a committee of College Government, is the primary organization on campus responsible for CPLA was originally the "Chair of Political and Legislative Action," an elected student tasked with bringing off-campus politics to the Wellesley College Government Cabinet and Senate. CPLA's first action was a protest calling for the college to divest from Apartheid South Africa. CPLA facilitates student engagement in voter registration, absentee voting, debate watches, political candidate visits to campus, and more.

Project on Public Leadership and Action (PPLA) grew out of a series of informal conversations between faculty with shared interests in doing values-based, practically-relevant work related to topics including (but not limited to) social change, democratic practice, and public leadership. In 2013-2014, PPLA is launching an inaugural year of pilot programming designed to create a dynamic space for faculty to further define the mission, activities, and purposes of the Project.

The Freedom Project at Wellesley is devoted to the promotion of freedom of expression, pluralism and tolerance on campus and in the greater world. Wellesley students and faculty participate actively in on-campus discussions and debates with each other and outside speakers, and pursue many opportunities with national and international organizations devoted to the expansion of freedom in a variety of contexts

Office of Civic Engagement in Career Education has a team focused on civic voting initiatives on campus and beyond. The Wellesley Partnerships team leads a group of peers in engaging students in social justice movements, student activism, voter registration, and political engagement. Civic Engagement also works with the Presidential Scholars which is a program designed to develop citizen leaders.

In addition to these groups, faculty, staff and students across campus participate in democratic engagement on an on-going basis. WellesleyVotes will allow us to bring these efforts together with a single voice.

Strategy

WellesleyVotes

Spring programming was postponed due to campus changes from COVID-19.

Fall programming resumed in August and will run through January 2021

August:

Orientation

Voter registration drive at first year Orientation: Staffed by CPLA

Suffrage 100MA

In lieu of the in-person march, which has been rescheduled to October 9, 2021, and to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the adoption of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, Suffrage100MA will be hosting a virtual event on August 26, 2020. Details forthcoming.

September:

Voter Registration

Voter registration drive facilitated in person and remotely by the Wellesley Committee for Political and Legislative Awareness (CPLA)

She Should Run

September 8 - September 24: She Should Run intensive (1.5 hour session on Tuesday and Thursday evenings). This will include 30 politically diverse students (21 from the original spring 2020 cohort) interested in running for elective office.

Health Disparities in the Global Pandemic

September 8th Wellesley alumnae Ophelia Dahl and Dr. Camara Jones will join President Paula Johnson for a 75 minute (50 minute webinar, 25 closed Q&A with Prez Scholars) webinar discussing health disparities in the global pandemic.

1619 Project

September 29th The Knapp Center will host [Nikole Hannah-Jones](#), founder of the [1619 Project](#), as the 2020 Wilson Lecture. Michael Jeffries will interview Nikole Hannah-Jones in a community webinar.

October:

Voter Registration and Absentee Ballot Drive

Voter registration and absentee ballot drive facilitated in person and remotely by the Wellesley Committee for Political and Legislative Awareness (CPLA)

Election Workers Spotlight

CPLA will lead a campaign to encourage students to register to work the polls on election day. The Alumnae Association will also share this student campaign with alums around the United States. Any student or alum who registers to work the polls will receive a WellesleyVotes sticker.

Black Lives & Black Votes in 2020 and Beyond

Date TBD Wellesley alumna and State Representative Liz Miranda, Professor Kellie Carter Jackson will discuss how the Movement for Black Lives puts racial justice on the ballot for the 2020 elections at the local and national level. The conversation, moderated by Callie Crosley, on the growing movement for racial justice and the future of democracy in America.

(75 minutes: 50 minute webinar, 25 closed Q&A with Prez Scholars)

November:

Community Organizing 101

Community organizing training hosted by PPLA co-chair and Political Science Professor Laura Grattan.

On the Front Lines of Democracy

Date TBD (November 16th) A 75 minute community webinar (50 minute webinar, 25 closed Q&A with WellesleyVotes Volunteers). A conversation with alumnae working on voter education efforts and voter outcomes in key states: Simone Archer Krause (?), GA Law Enforcement Initiative with the NAACP, moderated by Professor Jennifer Chudy, Political Science.

Civic Movements

November 18th -19th Hahrie Han, the inaugural director of the SNF Agora Institute, specializes in the study of civic and political participation, collective action, and organizing. She focuses particularly on the role that civic associations play in mobilizing participation in politics and building power for social and political change.

January Project

The January Project will include multiple opportunities for civic participation and democratic engagement for first years, sophomores, juniors, and seniors.

BostonVotes

Wellesley is also part of a Boston based group of institutions participating in BostonVotes. The Boston Votes Coalition is mobilizing voters in the Commonwealth to register to vote and either vote by mail or vote early due to COVID-19.

The following institutions are actively involved:

- Benjamin Franklin Institute of Technology
- Boston College
- Brandeis University
- Bunker Hill Community College
- Curry College
- Emerson College
- Harvard University
- Lasell University
- Lesley University
- Massachusetts College of Art and Design
- Middlesex Community College
- Northeastern University
- Suffolk University
- Tufts University
- University of Massachusetts Amherst
- University of Massachusetts Boston
- Wellesley College
- Wheaton College

Reporting and Evaluation

WellesleyVotes will have its own webpage (<https://www.wellesley.edu/events/wellesleyvotes>) where the community can find updates on events throughout the campaign. All participants will be asked to share attendance numbers, voter registration numbers, and planned events with the WellesleyVotes Working Group so that the campaign can be fully documented and evaluated as appropriate.

CPLA, PPLA, and Civic Engagement already track much of this data and it will be combined with the events data to capture a full picture of the work.

Our NSLVE report will provide the final piece of invaluable data to help understand where our efforts have been successful and how we can improve in the future.

This plan will continue to be modified as needed throughout the campaign. It will also serve as a foundation of future work.