



## Western Kentucky University 2022 Democratic Engagement Action Plan

Developed by: Molly Kerby

### **Executive Summary:**

This nonpartisan democratic engagement action plan was developed by Western Kentucky University in Kentucky 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 Western Kentucky University for the 2022 election are:

- Increase Voter Registration
- Increase Voter Participation

### **Leadership:**

Our leadership team includes the following:

- Molly Kerby - Assistant Provost for Institutional Effectiveness
- Saundra Ardrey - Associate Professor, Political Science
- Scott Lasley - Professor & Department Chair, Political Science

Our campus works with these following nonprofit partners:

- American Democracy Project
- The National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE)
- The *ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge*

### **Commitment:**

President Caboni signed the Presidents' Commitment by the November 8, 2022 election.

Further, Western Kentucky University has a history of prioritizing nonpartisan civic learning and democratic engagement. This is demonstrated by our institutions engagement with the following:

- AASCU's American Democracy Project
- C-USA Votes program
- Participation in NSLVE
- Course engagement with civic tools (e.g., dialogue, voter registration)
- A week of action related to Constitution Day

Further, WKU involves the broader (not just students) in the democratic process by providing education and Get Out the Vote resources to the general public. This serves as a tenet of our institution's prioritization of being with the community in all aspects of the work the institution offers.

## **Landscape:**

Western Kentucky University is a public 4-year institution and joined the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge in 2018.

Our campus demographic and voting data:

Western Kentucky University has 16,750 students; 14,729 undergraduate and 2,021 graduate. The following is a breakdown of all students:

- 12,115 full time - 4635 part time
- 18% URM
- 64% who identify as female
- 90% traditionally aged
- 76% in-state
- 2% International

Western Kentucky University has authorized NSLVE.

Our institution had a 2020 campus voting rate of 63.7%.  
Our institution had a 2020 voter registration rate of 85%.

Our institution had a 2018 voter turnout rate of 31%.  
Our institution had a 2018 voter registration rate of 76.9%.

Our institution has been recognized by ALL IN with the following seals: 2018 Silver, 2020 Silver

## **Goals:**

Our campus democratic engagement goals are:

Short-term Goals for 2022:

- Sending campus emails through the academic year related to registering to vote, making a plan to vote, and pledging to vote.
- Participating in a Pledge to Vote and Register to Vote campaign with colleagues at Middle Tennessee State University to support athletic and overall campus engagement in the electoral process by way of sports competitions in the fall semester of 2022.
- Participate in National Voter Registration Day for the first time in 2022 by being a campus partner and promoting registration efforts on September 20. During the day the President will provide free Rita's Italian Ice and the institution will coordinate a concert with Rock the Vote.
- Increase student voter registration rate to 78% in 2022 up from 76.9% in 2018.
- Increase student voter turnout to 35% up from 31% in 2018.

Long-term Goals leading up to 2024 election:

- Add a polling location on campus in 2024 for students and campus constituents to increase access to the polls.
- Continued participation in National Voter Registration Day; and exploration of participation in other civic holidays (e.g., Election Hero Day, Vote Early Day).

- Maintain student voter registration rate of 88% in 2024 up from 85% in 2020.
- Increase student voter turnout to 65% up from 63.7% in 2020.

### **Strategy:**

Western Kentucky University will implement these strategies to increase nonpartisan democratic engagement and student voter participation.

- Constitution Week panels related to voting
- Rock the Vote - voter registration support
- National Voter Registration Day
- National Voter Education Week
- Vote Early Day
- Engage with faculty to promote nonpartisan democratic engagement.
- Deliberative Dialogue programming about safeguarding elections.
- Students participate in Get Out the Vote canvassing efforts both virtually and in-person

### **Evaluation:**

We will evaluate our action plan in the following ways:

In addition to using your future 2022 NSLVE voting data, WKU measures nonpartisan engagement efforts through:

- Satisfaction surveys with programs
- Campus Climate Survey
- NSEE - Civic Engagement Module
- C-USA participation and evaluation

WKU is exploring the use of other assessment metrics such as:

- [HERI - First Year Assessment](#)
- [CAS Standards - Civic Engagement Modules](#)

If your campus hasn't authorized the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement ([NSLVE](#)) which gives you access to campus voting data reports, NSLVE can be authorized through [this form](#) and submitted to [NSLVE@Tufts.edu](mailto:NSLVE@Tufts.edu).

### **Reporting:**

Our campus action plan will be posted on our campus page on ALL IN's website <https://allinchallenge.org/campuses/western-kentucky-university/>.

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 will also create a Civic Engagement website this fall to house this data.