

William Paterson University Voter Election Action Plan 2024

William Paterson University 2024 Nonpartisan Democratic Engagement Action Plan

Submitted by: Dr. H. Mark Ellis, Director, American Democracy Project

Executive Summary:

This nonpartisan democratic engagement action plan was developed by William Paterson University in New Jersey for the 2024 election. The purpose of this action plan is to increase nonpartisan democratic engagement and student voter registration, education, and turnout in the 2024 election. The goals for William Paterson University for the 2024 election are:

William Paterson University Topline Campus Voter Engagement Goals

- 1. To bring awareness to our campus members of their rights and responsibilities as informed voters and members of the USA who reside in a global community;
- 2. To educate and engage our community in effective democratic processes and outcomes on and off campus;
- 3. To register all members of our campus community to participate in all elections such as campus elections, midterm elections, state elections, county elections, primary elections, fall 2024 elections, etc.;
- 4. To increase civic engagement on and off campus and after graduation;
- 5. To educate our community on issues on ballots, provide information on candidate profiles and positions, closing the loop by every member casting ballots in every election, and to become engaged members and change agents in their communities; and

6. To nurture, guide and provide spaces where our community can effectively strategize to let their voices be heard and their votes counted.

Leadership:

Our leadership team includes the following individuals, campus groups, and organizations:

H. Mark Ellis, Sociology, Criminal Justice & Social Work,

Director, American Democracy Project

Jonathan Lincoln, Associate Provost

Wartyna Davis, Dean, College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences

Josh Powers, Provost and Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs

Richard Helldobler, President

Miki Cammarata, Vice President, Student Development

Francisco Diaz, Associate Vice President, Student Development

Donna Minnich Spuhler, Director, Campus Activities, Service and Leadership

Gary Marks, Professor, Cheng Library

Jason Ambroise, Professor, History

Tia Cherry, Assistant Director for Academic Initiatives and Student Engagement

Djanna Hill, Associate Dean, College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences

Matt Mullins, Pioneer Pantry and Campus Activities, Service and Leadership

Wendy Wright, Professor, Political Science

Ryan Rebe, Chair, Political Science, Legal Studies, Geography, and Urban Studies

Tashia Burton, Advisor, Gloria S. Williams Advisement Center

Guillermo de Veyga, Strategic Initiatives and University Relations

Barbara Andrew, Director, Honors College

Carmen Ortiz, Executive Director of EOF and Academic Achievement

Loretta Mc Laughlin Vignier, Chief of Staff to the President and Board of Trustees

Sue Gerber, Assistant Vice President, Institutional Effectiveness

Jeanne Arnold, Chief Diversity Officer

Allison Boucher-Jarvis, Vice President for Human Resources

Myranda Louis Jean, Direction for Student Diversity and Inclusion

Wendy Christensen, Professor, Sociology and Chair of the Faculty Senate

Julie Vigorito, Administrative Assistant, Sociology and Political Science

Stuart Goldstein, Vice President for Marketing and Public Relations

Pamela Ferguson, Vice President for Institutional Advancement,

President, Foundation Board

Commitment:

This is the third action plan that William Paterson University has developed for ALL IN.

Our current President, Dr. Richard Helldobler, has signed the All IN Higher Education Presidents' Commitment to Full Student Voter Participation.

The commitment to civic engagement, voter education, voter registration, casting ballots, and helping students create the world that they want to live in and the next generation to inherit is woven into our recently revised Mission Statement. Please see the link below. In addition, Civic Engagement will be more deeply embedded in our new University Core Curriculum 2.0, which will be rolled out in fall 2025 with an emphasis on learning by doing, case-based learning, and making the most of the regional landscape, which includes Paterson, NJ and the surrounding area. Please see the link below. One of our core pillars of our General Education program is Community and Civic Engagement. That curriculum is outlined in Area 5 of our existing UCC program. Please see the link below. Last, our cocurricular programs and events offer myriad opportunities for Civic Engagement, and special campus presentations, lectures, and performances by prominent presenters from a variety of areas of expertise and professional forms of expression.

WP's Updated Mission Statement (2023-Present): https://www.wpunj.edu/about-us/mission.html

WP's University Core Curriculum: https://www.wpunj.edu/ucc/

WP's Co-Curricular Activities:

https://www.wpunj.edu/civic-engagement/partnersandresources.html

The commitment to nonpartisan democratic engagement is communicated to the campus community through the Office of Campus Activities, Service and Leadership via annual campus email campaigns, during on-boarding orientations and open house presentations, club fairs, weekly tabling, career, major/minor days, internship information sessions, and campus events focused on a variety of ways students and student leaders can incorporate service and civic engagement into their careers. In additions, with WP LEADS Civic Engagement Badge "credit" students attending ADP, CASL, Library, Honors, student organizations, etc. and sponsored civic engagement activities can earn various digital badges in leadership and entrance into the LEADS Honor Society.

Landscape:

NJ's voter registration laws are not really restrictive and are among a number of states whose laws were expansive in recent years. NJ enacted legislation permitting online voter registration, expansive early voting options, and continued flexibility with vote by mail.

There is one issue that inconveniences our students on campus and this is vote by mail procedures. Our campus mail system is emerging and there is not a US postbox on campus. Students who request a vote by mail ballot would still have to leave campus or locate a location on campus where they could actually mail in their ballot.

We do have a secured vote by mail dropbox on campus, however, dropboxes are specific to county residents. Since we are in Passaic County, NJ, only Passaic County voters should use the campus dropbox. Resident students from outside of Passaic County should not use the secured dropbox.

In the future, NJ could consider permitting all voters to use the secured dropboxes regardless of county ballot/residency, however, this would require additional logistical procedures for the state and perhaps delay vote tabulation, especially in regards to local elections.

The Voting Rights Lab provides reasonable state-by-state voting laws comparison. https://tracker.votingrightslab.org/states

Resources on dates for upcoming elections, 2024 primaries or caucuses, key voter registration deadlines, and additional information of voting and political issues are found in our campus *Voting 101 Guide* [https://guides.wpunj.edu/Voting101], which is curated by our faculty librarian and ADP Committee member, Professor Gary Marks.

"Looking Closer", exhibited directly below, provides comparative NSLVE 2022 data on voting and voter registration for William Paterson University students including 2014, 2018, 2020, and 2022. Given that these data are based primarily on midterm elections and fewer people vote during such elections and overall enrollment at WP is down since 2018, these data reported a decline in all significant categories except for growth in number of students who registered to vote with an increase in the voter registration rate in 2022.

	2014	2018	2020	2022	2018-2022 Change	This page provides the numbers we used to
	2014	2010				calculate your voting, registration, and yield rates. The sub-categories under total
Total Student Enrollment	10,885	9,982	9,493	8,862	1 -1,120	student enrollment are the adjustments that we
Age under 18/Unknown	98	44	32	22	♣ -22	make to account for students who are ineligible to vote due to age or citizenship status. We also
PEDS estimated non-resident aliens	100	76	73	139	1 63	exclude, when correctly flagged, students who are not pursuing degrees.
Datasource	IPEDS	NSC	IPEDS	IPEDS		When we have removed non-resident aliens
FERPA records blocked	152	27	21	-	-	(international students), it is based on your institution's enrollment submission to the NSC. This
Non-Degree Seeking Students	509	491	399	×		is indicated by NSC for non-resident aliens data source. We use IPEDS-derived estimates of NRAs
Total eligible voters	10,025	9,344	8,967	8,700	♣ -643	when institutions do not submit non-resident alien status data to NSC, or we cannot verify the accuracy
Number of students who registered	6,253	6,631	7,276	6,816	185	of the reported counts. This is indicated by IPEDS in the data source.
lumber of students who voted	1,347	3,347	6,046	2,151	\$-1,196	In the following pages with tables, Embried
Registration Rate %	62	70	81	78	# 7	represents the eligible voters when we have used NSC as the data source. When we have used IPEDS
oting Rate of Registered Students %	21	50	83	31	♣ -18	as the data source, Enrolled includes non-resident aliens who are ineligible to vote, and for whom we are unable to account due to the lack of data from
oting Rate %	13	35	67	24	♣ -11	your institution.

The table below presents comparative data from the 2016 the 2020 election cycles with 2018 midterm elections also reported. The data provide important information on voting registration and yield rates. We used these data to plan our 2024 voter election cycle action plan.

William Paterson University is now a HSI and MSI. With a decline in overall student enrollment since 2016, a fast-growing diverse student population, and increased enrollments in online degree programs, our goal is to increase our overall voter registration and yield rates among our online degree students and our diverse student population. While we will be discussing how to offer more voter education and programming for our online students, our primary focus is on our commuter and residential student populations. At the end of our of action plan, please see the Addendum for programs and events that we have offered since spring 2022 aimed at meeting our increased overall target goals.

	2016	2018	2020	2002.20		
	20.0	2010		2016-20 Change		This page provides the numbers we
Total Student Enrollment	10,334	9,938	9,461		-872	used to calculate your voting, registration, and yield rates. The sub-categories under total student
(Age under 18/Unknown)	16	-	-		-	enrollment are the adjustments that we make to account for students who are
(IPEDS estimated non-resident aliens)	129	76	77		-53	ineligible to vote due to age or citizenship status. We also exclude, when correctly
(FERPA records blocked)	63	27	21		-42	flagged, students who are not pursuing degrees.
(Non-Degree Seeking Students)	269	491	399		130	We use IPEDS-derived estimates of NRAs
Total eligible voters	9,857	9,344	8,965	+	-892	when institutions do not submit non-resident alien status data to NSC, or
Number of students who registered	6,860	6,631	7,276		416	we cannot verify the accuracy of the reported counts. This estimate is given by
Number of students who voted	5,113	3,347	6,046	*	933	"IPEDS estimated non-resident aliens" on this page. If you believe the number of
Registration Rate %	70	71	81	+	12	international students reported on this report is incorrect, you can manually adjust
Voting Rate of Registered Students %	75	50	83	+	9	your institution's voting rates by using our recalculation tool. https://id-
Voting Rate %	52	36	67	*	16	he.tufts.edu/nslve/nslve-recalculation-too



Based on data in the table directly above, it is our goal to build on the momentum gained from 2016 to 2020 with increases in registration rates, voting rate of registered students, and voting rates of eligible students who vote on Election Day during the 2024 election cycle.

		2016			2018			2020		2016-2020	
This page provides the numbers we used to calculate race / ethnicity group voting rates. We include the counts of students and the change in rates between the two most recent comparable election years. If you notice unavailable/missing data in this page, it could mean any of the following for your institution: (i) does not report this data; (ii) did not provide this data in past years; (iii) does not separately submit data for one or more of the demographic groups, or		Enrolled	Voted	Rate	Enrolled	Voted	Rate	Enrolled	Voted	Rate	(p.p)
	Asian	704	277	39	671	193	29	669	406	61	1 21
	American Indian/		-	-	12	-	14		+	-	-
	Alaska Native	1,541	687	45	1,634	483	30	1,635	1,020	62	1 8
		2,735	1,403	51	2,918	984	34	2,879	1,836	64	★ 12
	Hispanic Native Hawaiian/	-	-		-	-	-	-	1-1	-	
	Pacific Islander	284	162	I 57	287	112	39	298	189	63	+
	2 or More Races		2.461	56	3,694	1,525	41	3,366	2,509	75	*
	the White	4,381	2,401	3		44	36	174	76	44	*

It is our aim to further increase our voter registration and voter turnout rates among all racial and ethnic groups in the 2024 election cycle. Our voter education and voter registration campaigns on campus focus on educating our students on the issues on all

ballots and for all elections. We aim to increase student participation in campus elections, civic engagement on campus, service-learning opportunities, midterm elections, classroom discussion, special events, lecture, etc. and awareness of social and political issues relevant to and of interest to our students' lived experiences.

William Paterson University Select Facts and Profile

William Paterson University is a public, 4-year Hispanic-Serving Institution and joined the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge in 2019.

Campus Demographic and Voting Data:

Campus Size: William Paterson University has 9,942 students.

Instate:

Out-of-State:

In State	92%
Out of State	6%
International	2%
Unknown	<1%

Residential: 13%

Commuter: 87%

100% Online:

Main

Campus 60%

WP Online 40%

Age:

20 or under	23%
21-24	27%
25-34	28%
34-44	13%
45 or older	8%

Race:

Asian	7%
Black	19%
Hispanic	31%
White	35%
Other	8%

Goals:

Our institution's nonpartisan democratic engagement goals are to:

- Increase the student voter turnout rate by 10%-15% in 2024 compared to 2020 and by 5%-10% in 2026 compared to 2022.
- Increase the student voter registration rate by 20% in 2024 compared to 2020 and by 10% compared to 2022 in 2026.
- Include voter registration at new and transfer student orientations for fall 2024 and beyond.

Strategy:

William Paterson University will implement these strategies to increase nonpartisan democratic engagement and student voter participation. Please see below for actions taken to implement our 2024 action plan.

- 1. At New Student Orientations, the Office of Campus Activities, Service and Leadership (CASL) provided voter registration information at Services Fair tabling for new students.
- 2. A Civic Engagement email was sent to all students at the start of each fall semester for the past six years outlining the importance of service, opportunities, and links for information on voter registration and voting. Students were provided with the opportunity to register to vote through WP Connect.
- 3. Every 9/17/, Constitution Day, we present a major kick-off event for our Constitution Week of activities.
- 4. Our Student Government Association holds elections each semester for new Senators, with a swearing in ceremony at a fall meeting. This year it was held on on 09/24/2024.
- 5. We participate in the NJ Ballot Bowl Kick-Off and Competition every fall. WP has competed since it began seven years ago and has consistently placed in the top three for our category. We just hosted the state's biggest Ballot Bowl Kick-Off (as

- reported by the Lt. Gov's staff) on 9/17/24 in which Lt. Gov. Way and over 250 people attended. This year's event was on National Voter Registration Day and Constitution Day.
- 6. CASL and the Library do tabling for voter registration and pledges throughout the fall semester until election day. We also work with student organizations to help register students. For this semester, CASL created flyers with QR codes to voter registration and a pledge to vote (through All in Challenge) links placed all over campus, residence halls and on tables in the dining hall. Staff are also working with Athletics, Honors and EOF to register students at their meetings and events.
- 7. CASL sent students to the annual EngageNJ Thrive Conference in February 2024, which focused on a variety of ways student can incorporate service and civic engagement into their careers.
- 8. WP LEADS Civic Engagement Badge awards "credit" for students attending ADP, CASL, Library, Honors, student organizations, sponsored civic engagement activities, and presentations and performances.
- 9. Marketing and Public Relations at WP has launched a mini-campaign on social media to encourage our community to vote and to post photos and or videos of themselves dropping off ballots or sporting "I voted" stickers as a means to encourage their fellow Pioneers to vote, too. We are using the hashtag **#WPVotes** on all such posts. We made our first post today, 10/01/2024, with President Richard Helldobler dropping off his mail-in ballot. https://www.instagram.com/p/DAl-Lr5pPyl/

Evaluation:

We will evaluate our action plan in the following ways:

William Paterson University participates in the NSSE data collection process and the Office of Institutional Effectiveness also administers several surveys using various metrics to measure the topline goals outlined at the beginning of our action plan above. In addition, the Office of Campus Activities, Service and Leadership are given yearly KPI's from the President that measures the impact of civic engagement on voter registration and voter yield.

In addition, right before the pandemic, our American Democracy Project Committee launched a campus survey with the aim of studying students' attitudes towards politics, political involvement and political awareness. We used measures to study voter registration, voter turnout, and interest in and understanding of civic engagement and similarly-related issues. We also asked opened-ended questions soliciting ideas from students on what types of programming around these topics they would like offered on or off campus. The pandemic hit and that was also the year of the Census. Our response rate was low and the priority of the moment was dictated by the pandemic. We closed the survey with a small response rate. Now that we are living in a post-pandemic culture and our institution is experiencing new and exciting enrollment trends and a decolonized

curriculum and workplace, we will launch a survey in spring 2025 to revisit these issues as we plan more strategically for the next election cycles.

Reporting:

William Paterson University's final Voter Election Action Plan 2024 will be eventually shared on our campus page on the ALL IN's website: https://allinchallenge.org/campuses/william-paterson-university/

Our action plan and NSLVE reports will the shared with our campus ADP Committee members, the Office of the Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs, the Dean of the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Science, the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs, the President's office, and the Office of Institutional Effectiveness.

Please see Addendum below.

Addendum:

William Paterson University 2022-2024 Voter Education Election Event Inventory

William Paterson University of New Jersey Wayne, NJ 07470 American Democracy Project

ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge

Resources:

William Paterson University American Democracy Project Webpage: https://www.wpunj.edu/adp/

Civic Engagement at William Paterson University:

https://www.wpunj.edu/civic-engagement/

Campus Activities, Service and Leadership:

https://www.wpunj.edu/campus-activities/

Office of Student Diversity and Inclusion:

https://www.wpunj.edu/osdi/

"Voting 101: Elections & Voting Resources" [Professor Gary Marks]: https://guides.wpunj.edu/Voting101

Events Spring 2022

"Change the Subject: Screening and Discussion: Discussion with Melissa Padilla", Prof. Marks, 04/07/2022

"Your Vote, Our Future: Why Midterm Elections Matter", Panel 04/28, 2022

Events Fall 2022

"Constitution Day: Roe v. Wade, The State of Federal Abortion Rights", Prof. Marks, 09/22/2022

"William Paterson University Campus Elections", Campus Partners, Fall 2022

"Voting Registration & Civic Engagement" Prof. Marks, 10/13/2022

"Voting 101", Prof. Marks 10/27/2022

"Backlash Politics and the Struggle for a Multiracial Democracy in the Twenty-First Century", Dr. Harris, 11/16/2022

Events Spring 2023

"Lincoln's Gettysburg Address: Reading and Discussion", Dr. Wright, 02/13/2023

"US-China Rivalry in Africa", Dr. Tesfaye, 03/28/23

"Politics of Abolition Campus Conference", Political Science, Legal Studies, Geography, and Urban Affairs, 04/12/2023

"Decolonization and Globalization: Democracy Movements", Dr. Kalaramadam, 04/13/2023

Events Fall 2023

"Affirmative Action & Higher Education", Prof. Marks 09/19/2023

"William Paterson University Campus Elections", Campus Partners, Fall 2023

"Last Day to Register to Vote, Campus Partners, 10/17/2023

"Voting Treat", Prof. Marks, 10/31/2023

"LGBTQIA+ Pride Celebration Opening Keynote", Mr. Joe Forte, 10/17/2023

"Bi Weekly Voter Registration and Information Tabling", Campus Partners, 08/31/2023-11-11/07/2023

"NJ Ballot Bowl Voter Registration and Voter Pledges", Campus Partners Fall 2023

"Political Science & Model UN Days", Dr. Rebe, Fall 2023

"WP Homecoming and Family Day Carnival Tabling", Campus Partners Fall 2023

"Domestic Violence Representation Project", Ms. Theresa Bivaletz, Fall 2023

"Annual Diversity Fair", Campus Partners, Fall 2023

"Contexts Conference: AI: The Beginning or the End?", College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences, Fall 2023

"Honors Coat Drive", Dr. Andrew, Fall 2023

"Native American & Indigenous Opening Performance", Campus Partners, 11/02/2023

"Remembrance and Veterans Appreciation Day", Campus Partners, 11/09/2023

"Transgender and Non-Binary Week Opening Speaker," Ms. Louis Jean, 11/14/2023

"Exploring Cultural Identity", [Amsterdam University of Applied Sciences will engage students from all over the world together in a conversation about cultural identity via Zoom.] Dr. Andrew, 11/21/2023

"2nd Annual Neuro-Diversity Fun Fair", Ms. Louis Jean, 11/30/2023

Events Spring 2024

 $^{\prime\prime}2^{nd}$ Annual BSW Convening Session: A Focus on Empowerment", Prof. Lake, 03/19/2024

"Your Vote Matters: Special Guest, NJ Senator Joseph Cryan:", Campus Partners, 04/02/2024

"Middle East 101: Screening and Discussion of "Holy Land", Dr. Natrajan and Dr. Ellis, 04/03/2024

"Authoritarianism or Democracy?", Prof. Marks, 04/11/2024

"Community Visioning: For the State Development and Redevelopment Plan", Prof. Marks, 04, 25, 2024

Events Fall 2024

"Constitution Week", Campus Partners, 09/17/2024-09/20/2024

"William Paterson University Hosts Statewide NJ Ballot Bowl", Ms. Minnich-Spuhler, 09/17/2024

"William Paterson University Campus Elections", Campus Partners, Fall 2024

"Money in Politics: A Pod-Talk", Prof. Marks, 09/18/2024

"Affirmative Action & Higher Education", Prof. Marks, 09/19/2024

"Pop Up Voter Registration and Information Tabling", Campus Partners, $09/24/2024\,$

"Digital Disconnect: How Capitalism Is Turning the Internet Against Democracy", Prof. Marks, 10/03/2024

"Voter Registration Tabling", Prof. Marks, 10/08/2024, and 10/15/2024

"Community Conversations: Gender, Race, Sexuality, and Immigration on the Ballot", Dr. Kalaramadam and Dr. Milanes, 10/16/2024

"Government Law Fair", Dr. Rebe, 10/15/2024

"Youth Rights: Education, Opportunities, Environment, and Media Content", College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences at William Paterson University, 10/24/2024

"The Young Vote", Prof. Marks, 10/29/2024

"Are You Ready to Vote?" Mock Voting Booth and Voter Resources", Prof. Marks, 10/31/02024

"Election Night Watch Party", Campus Partners, 11/05/2024

"Post Election Campus Discussion", Dr. Wright, November 2024

"Crisis in the Middle East", Campus Partners, November 2024

Spring 2025

"Look Who Is In the White House: Now What and Planning for the Next Midterm Elections", January 2025

"Responsible Protesting: The History of Effective Social Movements and Student Engagement", February 2025

"William Paterson University Public Elected Officials: A Day in the Life of a Public Servant", March 2025

"Discussion: William Paterson University Center for First-Time Political Candidates", March 2025

"Campus Town Hall Meeting: Shaping and Claiming the Legacy of Gen Z., April 2025

Event Highlights Covered by the Media

• William Paterson University Hosts 2024 Statewide Student Ballot Bowl Kick-Off

https://www.wpunj.edu/articles/news/2024-09-18/university-hosts-statewide-student-ballot-bowl-kick-off-event

• WP Selected as Host for New Jersey's Ballot Bowl Kick-Off Pep Rally on September 17 with Lt. Governor Tahesha Way:

https://www.wpunj.edu/articles/news/2024-09-12/ballot-bowl-kick-off-lieutenant-governor-tahesha-way

• William Paterson University Recognized for Excellence in Student Voter Registration Turnout during the 2022 Midterm Election:

https://www.wpunj.edu/articles/news/2024-09-11/william-paterson-university-recognized-for-excellence-in-student-voter-registration-turnout

Inspiring Women in Business: NJ Lt. Governor Tahesha Way Gives Keynote Speech at William Paterson's Small Business Development Center:

https://www.wpunj.edu/articles/news/2024-08-20/william-paterson-small-business-development-center-womens-conference-gov-tahesha-way

NJ State Sen. Nellie Pou Tells Graduates to Take Risks, Embrace Opportunities During William Paterson's 2024 Undergraduate Commencement Ceremony:

https://www.wpunj.edu/articles/news/2024-05-22/new-jersey-state-senator-nellie-pou-commencement-2024

Cassidy Hutchinson, Key Witness at January 6th Hearings, to Speak on March 27 as Part of William Paterson University Distinguished Lecturer Series:

https://www.wpunj.edu/articles/news/2024-02-28/cassidy-hutchinson-key-witness-at-january-6th-hearings-to-speak-on-march-27-as-part-of-william-paterson-university-distinguished-lecturer-series

Respectfully Submitted,

Dr. H. Mark Ellis,
Professor of Sociology and Criminal Justice
Director, American Democracy Project
Department of Sociology, Criminal Justice, and Social Work
William Paterson University
300 Pompton Road
Wayne, NJ 07470
973-720-3411 (office)
973-720-2274 (department)
973-720-2000 (campus)
ellism@wpunj.edu