

**ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge Action Plan  
Fall 2017**

Submitted December 15, 2017

*“At Bates, community engagement is a prized institutional value. Since its founding by abolitionists in 1855, Bates has been committed to education as a means to individual and social transformation. As the college’s current-day mission statement avows, a Bates education aspires to cultivate “informed civic action” and “responsible stewardship of the wider world.” Toward this end, and with the support of the Harward Center for Community Partnerships, Bates students, faculty, and staff enact the college’s civic mission through reciprocal and sustained partnerships that connect the college and the community in mutually beneficial and transformative ways.”*

**Contact Information:**

Peggy Rotundo  
Director, Strategic and Policy Initiatives  
Harward Center for Community Partnerships  
Bates College  
207-786-8283  
[mrotundo@bates.edu](mailto:mrotundo@bates.edu)

Kristen Cloutier  
Assistant Director, Center Operations  
Program Coordinator, Project Pericles and Davis Projects for Peace  
Harward Center for Community Partnerships  
Bates College  
207-786-6202  
[kcloutie@bates.edu](mailto:kcloutie@bates.edu)

**Our Political Engagement Goals and Initiatives**

*Voter Registration Initiative*

During the 2016 presidential and 2017 municipal election seasons, the Harward Center hosted several voter registration drives on campus to help motivate students to register, volunteer in campaigns, educate themselves, and turn out at the polls. Voter registration activities included:

- Harward Center Voter Registration Drive during New Student Orientation
- Harward Center Voter Registration Drive in Commons
- Bates Democrats Get Out the Vote Voter Registration Drive in Commons

In all, 531 students registered to vote as a result of these efforts. In addition, numerous Bates students either registered to vote or updated their address at the polls on Election Day.

### National Research

Bates participates in the National Study of Learning, Voting and Engagement (NSLVE) and continues to use the research to measure the effectiveness of our work on campus and to motivate us to increase student participation in the voting process.

### Programming by the Politics and Rhetoric Departments

Since 2012, the Politics and Rhetoric Departments have worked together to create a series of events related to the election season. During the 2016 election cycle, their series included three public lectures from visiting faculty as well as debate-watching parties, with discussion facilitated by a faculty member after each; panel discussions with visiting scholars before and after the election; and an election night party in partnership with the Office of Campus Life. The departments also reached out to the Office of Intercultural Education to develop programming that intersected with the OIE'S mission and the election.

Professor Stephanie Kelley-Romano and students from her Presidential Campaign Rhetoric course offered their election analysis in a multi-media presentation for the larger Lewiston-Auburn community at a forum at the public library.

### Reflection Opportunities

Bates offered numerous opportunities for students to reflect on the outcome of the election, both through presentations by an alumnus who had worked on the Clinton campaign and by faculty.

The evening after the election, U.S. Senator Susan Collins met with students as part of the college's Purposeful Work Unplugged series, talking with them about her career path as well as the consequences of the election.

Maine Secretary of State Matthew Dunlap also came to campus after the election to present Bates students with the Maine Secretary of State's Voter Registration Rumble Award, given in recognition of the college having registered more students to vote than any other higher education institution in Maine.

### Election Materials

VISTA volunteer Brenna Callahan '16 blitzed the Bates campus with nonpartisan information to educate students about the policy positions of local and national candidates and to provide background on state and local ballot questions. This information as well as information on voter registration requirements were available on the Harvard Center's website.

### Project Pericles: Student Choices Student Voices (SCSV)

This is a program sponsored by the Project Pericles consortium that encourages colleges and universities to develop innovative projects on campus and in the community to engage voters in the election process and government. SCSV seeks to increase voter registration and voting for students and community members. SCSV encourages and facilitates thoughtful engagement of

students in the political process, including learning about candidates, understanding issues, and championing knowledgeable opinions.

SCSV works directly with designated students on campus (through virtual means), connecting them to students with similar issue-area interests at other campuses, and providing them with ideas and encouragement for engaging their peers in the political process.

To date, seven Bates students have participated in this program: Amanda Brea '20, Arthur Churchwell '19, Patricia Crimmins '19, Megan Currie '19, James Erwin '18, Oliver Farnum '19, and Brian Pansius '18.

#### *Maine Campus Compact: Campus Election Engagement Project (CEEP)*

This program is sponsored by Maine Campus Compact and works with campus administrators, faculty, staff, and student leaders to provide the support needed to engage students in local, state, and federal elections. The program taps into resources drawn from colleges and universities throughout the country (e.g., nonpartisan election guides) and adds personalized coaching to guide campuses on how to use these resources to navigate students through ever-changing barriers to voting.

The Harvard Center hosts the college's participation in this project, which includes voter registration drives on campus and residence hall programming.

#### *#College Debate 2016*

Hosted by Dominican University of California, Bates was a voter education partner for this initiative, which used technology and social media plus a nationwide network of diverse student delegates to energize students to be active in our democracy.

Partner institutions like Bates nominated students to apply to serve as 2016 College Convention Delegates. Delegates attended a delegate training at Dominican University on June 2-3, 2016 and gathered again for the Convention on September 9-10, 2016 (travel, meals, and accommodations provided). At the first gathering, delegates attended seminars and workshops equipping and inspiring them to return to their campuses to engage voters and promote involvement in the election process. As part of the Convention in September, a 90-minute moderated Town Hall meeting was streamed live to watch gatherings at the delegates' home campuses across the country. Peers engaged virtually. The final product of the evening was a memo to the moderators of the Presidential Debates that suggested the key issues the College Delegates wanted the candidates to address. Megan Currie '18 represented Bates.

#### *Get Out the Vote (GOTV) Efforts*

The Bates campus was filled with colorful and catchy posters reminding students of the importance of voting. Harvard Center representatives visited residence hall advisor meetings to energize them about encouraging their residents to vote. Faculty were encouraged to promote the importance of voting in their classes. Through our VISTA volunteer, athletic teams were encouraged to participate in GOTV efforts, with team captains leading their teammates to the

polls on election day. Student volunteers lead groups of students to the polls throughout the day, and signs were put up to direct people to the polling place.

Students engaged in phone banking and “tabling” in the dining hall. There was an impromptu event in the library on the eve of the election. Students “chalked” the sidewalks and used social media to remind people to vote. On Election Day, a huge chart in the Dining Commons tallied the number of students who voted and the college’s mascot, the Bates Bobcat, made an appearance during dinner to urge everyone to vote. In the 2017 election, students drove others to City Hall for early voting.

### *Plans for the 2018 Election*

Major additions for the next election cycle involve creating a campus-wide committee of staff, faculty, and students to officially plan and coordinate election activities. There is also discussion about enabling students to register to vote when they register for courses over the summer, and to make voter registration available at different college events in the fall.

We look forward to our continued participation in the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge, to learning best practices from our fellow institutions, and to finding inspiration in their work.