



# **Democratic Engagement Plan Submitted in Connection with the All In Campus Democracy Challenge**

## **Edgewood College Madison, WI**

### ***OVERVIEW***

Edgewood College, rooted in the Dominican tradition, engages students within a community of learners committed to building a just and compassionate world. The College educates students for meaningful personal and professional lives of ethical leadership, service, and a lifelong search for truth. To this end, Edgewood College seeks to educate students about the American political and election processes and engage them in study, reflection and action on these processes. Our goal is to create a campus in which students, faculty and staff will be aware of and actively engaged in the election process and will have access to voter education.

Edgewood College students voted at a 73% rate in the 2012 presidential election and a 54% rate in the 2014 midterm election. In 2012 over 90% of students who registered to vote did actually vote. In 2012 students between the ages of 18-21 voted at a 57.5% rate, while students between 40-49 years of age voted at an 89% rate. This pattern is consistent in the 2014 midterm election as well. This data suggests that while we have an exceedingly high overall student voter turnout in comparison to our peer institutions, our more traditional-age undergraduate students (ages 18-21) have the lowest voter participation rate of any of our student populations. This is an area of focus for us in our election and voter education and engagement plans.

## **Members of Campus-Wide Election Engagement Committee**

This committee is meeting on an ongoing basis during the fall semester.

Tricia Dusick, Civic Engagement Coordinator

Joseph Haferman, Director of Student Involvement

Megan Lyneis, Student Government Association President

Steve Bullock, Assistant Director for Servant Leadership

Steve Davis, Professor of Social Sciences

Hollie McCrea-Olson, Area Hall Director

Glenna Scholle-Malone, Director of Student Diversity and Inclusion

## **Collaborating Community Partners**

Office of the City Clerk – City of Madison

League of Women Voters of Dane County

## **BEST PRACTICES**

### **Voter Registration**

Both formal voter registration days and voter registration assistance available at other college events will be planned so that outreach can reach the greatest number of potential voters.

#### **Formal voter registration dates on Edgewood's campus:**

- League of Women Voters of Dane County – September 23
- National Voter Registration Day – September 27 (City Clerk's Office)

#### **Voter registration opportunities throughout the fall:**

Members of the Student Government Association have completed training from the City Clerk's Office to serve as Special Registration Deputies. Special Registration Deputies have the authority to assist potential voters in completing the voter registration form and also signifying by use of their Special Registration Deputy number that they have seen valid proof of residence (a requirement under Wisconsin voter registration law).

These Special Registration Deputies will be present at most significant campus events in the fall, including at least one athletic competition to support students in completing the voter registration process. Faculty and staff may also request that a Special Registration Deputy attend one of their classes or a specific program they are facilitating.

### **Voter Education**

Our goal is to provide opportunities to become more informed about the political, election and voter process.

#### **Presidential Debate Watch Party – September 26.**

Student, faculty and staff will be invited to attend a group viewing of the first presidential debate. A faculty member from the Communication Studies Department will provide introductory information on what to look for when watching a debate, as well as opportunities to interact with students across the country on other campuses who are also watching the debate live.

#### **Election Question and Answer Session**

Faculty members in the Social Sciences will host a question and answer session regarding the election process, as well as provide information on how each of the presidential candidates stand on issues of importance to students. The session will be held in an on-campus residence hall in order to promote voter education and awareness of our students residing on campus.

#### **Student Government Association Educational Outreach**

Student Government Association will provide non-partisan information to their peers about the election and resources for students to become educated about the candidates running for office.

#### **Voter Education Resources Online**

Voter registration, voter ID and online resources explaining the voting process will be made available on our internal Edgewood College website for students.

### **Outreach and Awareness to Staff and Faculty**

Information about the campus election engagement plan and specific voter education and voter registration activities was presented at meetings of both the Staff Association and Faculty Association. The goal was to inform staff and faculty about the voter opportunities so that they could better pass these along to students that they work with in the classroom or in programs they manage.

### **Get out the Vote**

Our goal is to reduce barriers to voting that students might face because of access to the polls, transportation or other resource challenges.

### **Absentee and Early Voting on Campus**

Edgewood College will serve as an early voting/absentee voting polling location from October 31 – November 4. Staff from the City Clerk's Office will set up voting booths and anyone residing within the city of Madison will be able to cast their ballot at the polling location located at Wingra Commons at Edgewood College. Students, staff and faculty can all utilize the Edgewood College polling place as an official polling location and they may also register to vote at the same time if they have not already done so.

**Election Day shuttle** – Edgewood College's Student Government Association will operate a free shuttle all day to and from Edgewood College to the official Election Day polling place in the College's district all day during polling hours on November 8. This service has been offered in the past and both the visibility of the shuttle and the convenience have made it a popular option for students choosing to vote on Election Day.

### **Evaluation Process**

After the election we will debrief as a committee to discern how well the election engagement plan worked and what activities seemed to be the most successful or least successful.

When we receive our NSLVE data for the 2016 election we will compare these results to our 2012 NSLVE data. We will utilize the data, as well as feedback from election engagement activities to better assess the impact our election engagement activities made on student participation in voting.