

All In Challenge Action Plan 2020
Bryn Mawr College



Campus Committee:

Ellie Esmond, Career & Civic Engagement Center (Lead)
Nell Anderson, Career & Civic Engagement Center
Lisa Armstrong, Career & Civic Engagement Center
Marissa Golden, Associate Professor, Political Science
Mary Beth Horvath, Director of Student Activities & Orientation
Johanna Mudry, KY & PA State Director, CEEP (Campus Election Engagement Project)
Tonja Nixon, First-Year Experience Coordinator, Dean's Office
Sydney Robertson, Career & Civic Engagement
Beatrice Stewart, Student, CEEP Fellow
Arlene Zimmerle, Humanities & Media Librarian, Library & Information Technology Services

Executive Summary:

Bryn Mawr College is a small, historically women's college located on a residential campus just outside of the city of Philadelphia, PA. The College is a leader in academic innovation, with a strong emphasis on putting learning into action through research, fieldwork, civic engagement, and internships. Bryn Mawr's mission states that "the College's rigorous liberal arts curriculum and distinguished graduate programs foster a thirst for knowledge, open inquiry, global perspectives, civic engagement, and innovation through study across the arts, humanities, sciences, and social sciences" with a goal of preparing students for "lives of purpose." Included in that mission is the belief that participation in civic life through service, activism, advocacy, and political engagement is a key component of life both during and after college.

Bryn Mawr College's campus action plan is a team effort coordinated by faculty, staff, student, and community members who share a passion for student civic engagement. The committee members listed above represent those on the team who hold leadership roles in executing elements of our plan, but we also include our paid and volunteer student leaders, student campus political affinity groups, faculty members who invite us into their classes, and staff who assist with van rides to the polls and referrals to the Career & Civic Engagement Center when students have questions about voting. The responsibility of All In Challenge Committee Lead is written into the job description of the Director of Service & Leadership Programs within the Career & Civic Engagement Center insuring that the committee and its work will continue regardless of the staff member inhabiting the position.

Our overall campus goal as related to voter registration, voter education, and get-out-the-vote efforts centers around making sure students feel confident in their choice of where to register and that they feel knowledgeable about the options available to them about how to cast their vote and support the candidates and causes that are important to them. Our methodology is to engage students through multiple channels of communication—in person conversations, information

sessions, online resources, and peer to peer education. To that end we offer opportunities for voter registration in classrooms, dining halls, community gathering spaces, the libraries, and in our Civic Engagement office. At every event we work to empower students to feel educated, prepared, and confident about their choices regarding voter registration and secure in their role as welcomed participants in democracy.

Key partnerships that offer invaluable resources and support for our work include:

- All In Democracy Challenge
- Campus Election Engagement Project
- Code for Good (BMC Campus Student Organization)
- Montgomery County, PA Voter Services Office
- National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) Report
- Pennsylvania Campus Compact
- Philadelphia Higher Education Network for Neighborhood Development (PHENND)

Community Outreach & Engagement

The Covid-19 pandemic will heavily impact our outreach strategy targeting incoming and returning students for the 2020 – 2021 academic year. In the past, we relied heavily on tabling events which are a very effective, visible, and popular way to reach students on our campus. Tabling events traditionally involved students and staff members in high traffic areas like our dining halls, campus center, and Pem Arch (the main pedestrian thoroughfare on campus). However, in order to adhere with social distancing requirements, we will implement low or no contact voter registration outreach in the fall including:

- Voter registration webinars in late August/early September targeting incoming students during orientation
- Voter registration webinars presented to all students during September and October 2020
- Appointment options for students to receive one-on-one virtual assistance with the academic librarians and Civic Engagement staff
- Large scale public outreach campaigns utilizing social media on Constitution Day and National Voter Registration Day
- Inclusion of a session on voter registration as part of the THRIVE first year seminar curriculum (mandatory for all first year students)
- Frequent updates on the Civic Engagement voter resources website (<https://www.brynmawr.edu/career-civic/student-funding-and-resources/voting-information>) to offer a consistent source of reliable information for student voters
- Leveraging student leaders through our CEEP Fellow to reach students in affinity groups to provide them with up to date voter registration information
- Collaborate with student in BMC's Code for Good club to develop a twitter bot to encourage voter registration and remind students of voter registration/ballot request deadlines

Get Out The Vote Efforts:

It is difficult to predict whether in-person voting will feel safe to students (or if it will be encouraged/permitted by local government officials). We are fortunate in Pennsylvania to have the ability to offer all students the option to vote by mail and we anticipate a large number of students opting into this method. To that end we plan to create a social media campaign that will utilize departmental Facebook/Instagram/Twitter accounts across campus as well as student affinity group social media channels to educate students about the PA mail in ballot option and alert them about the deadlines to request their ballots for the Presidential election.

If we are safely able to do so, we will also offer our traditional Election Day Shuttle Service which provides free rides to student voters, transporting them between campus and our assigned polling place between 9 am – 8:30 pm. Faculty, staff, and student volunteers serve as van drivers to provide this service which increases student access to the polls.

The Committee will also work together to provide nonpartisan candidate guides for students and provide opportunities for students to reflect on their values, priorities, and principles to help them discern which candidates they wish to support. These resources—which used to be distributed at our tabling and in-person events—will live online so all students will be able to access them.

Campus Goals:

We are excited to use our NSLVE data to help us target underrepresented groups on our campus. We plan to present the data to our faculty members at a fall faculty meeting to increase their awareness of student voting rates on campus as well as the supports available to student voters. We will encourage faculty members to include in-class reminders about voter registration deadlines and available resources (including a PowerPoint presentation created by Career & Civic Engagement for faculty use) and invite their input on our outreach strategy.

According to our 2018 NSLVE report, our campus voting rate was 47.5% with 82.5% of students registered to vote. We would like to see our campus voting rate rise to exceed 50%. We would also like to specifically target academic departments such as Mathematics and Psychology which had low representations among the majors in the study. Targeted outreach to these departments will hopefully move the needle and increase the percentage of voters so that each department exceeds 30%.

To evaluate our outreach strategy, we will track our social media accounts and postings to measure engagement with voter registration and get out the vote related posts. We plan to offer a raffle connected to an voter engagement survey that will help us gather data related to students' voter registration status, barriers that are keeping them from registering to vote or voting, and offer us a snapshot of how many students have requested a mail in ballot. By strategically offering this survey 2 weeks in advance of the mail in ballot request deadline, we hope to be able to quickly respond and address misinformation or misunderstandings while connecting students with resources in time to make a difference in voting rates.