

CAPITAL UNIVERSITY

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**ALL IN CHALLENGE
ACTION PLAN**

Executive Summary

Capital University has a rich history of civic and community engagement. Capital students, faculty, and staff are dedicated community members who care about the communities, both locally and globally. For several years, a cross-university team has worked together to “get out the vote” encouraging students to register and vote, either by absentee ballot or by changing their voting location to Capital University. This year, joining with its Ohio Athletic Conference (OAC) colleagues, Capital University will further engage student-athletes to help spread awareness. A second focus will be on programming, provided by campus entities and student organizations to promote voting awareness, voter education, and election celebrations.

Leadership

The Office of Student and Community Engagement (SCE) has provided leadership to a campus-wide team dedicated to advancing civic engagement of Capital University students. The campus-wide team coordinates programming through regular meetings and email communication. The group also works directly with civic-minded student organizations to promote and support programming focused on civic engagement, and specifically, on participation in the election process as a voter.

SCE Leadership Team

Deanna N. Wagner
Dean of Engagement and Success

Abbey Rutschilling
Program Coordinator

Campus-Wide Team

Dixie Jeffers, Associate Athletic Director
Suzanne Marilley - Professor, Political Science
Sean Socha, Electronic Resources Librarian
Abby Righter - Area Director, Residential and Commuter Life
Shaunda Vasudev - Outreach and Engagement Librarian
Stephanie Gray Wilson - Assistant Provost for Experiential Learning

Student Organizations

College Democrats - Ethan Roberts, President
College Republicans - Lynna Freeman, President
Socialist Student Union – Jacob DiGeronimo
Student Government - Adam Scherman, President

Commitment

Capital University’s commitment to promoting civic engagement is evident in various levels of the institution. First, the University values emphasize a commitment to building community and inspiring civil discourse (See Figure 1). Free Inquiry, a value grounded in Capital’s Lutheran heritage,

Figure 1

Capital University Values

Values**Free Inquiry**

Cultivating open dialogue and critical exploration.

Ethical Stewardship

Acting in pursuit of human dignity and social justice.

Challenging Boundaries

Using multiple perspectives to create new knowledge and solutions.

Authentic Contributions

Developing and applying the innate gifts of each person for the good of society.

Open Community

Celebrating an empowering, faith-friendly environment of inclusion and respect.

Embracing Hope

Cultivating joy in our daily experience and optimism for a better future.

Further, Capital University's general education program, Signature Learning, is a four-year comprehensive program encompassing both curricular and co-curricular experiences that serves as the foundation of every student's education. Capital University is committed to the liberal education that readies the student for every arena of life. Liberal education develops intellectual skills, expands the breadth of learning through exploration of several modes of inquiry, and challenges students to examine foundational ethical and cultural assumptions. It enables students to think critically and reflectively on vocation, citizenship, service, and religious and ethical commitments.

Three student learning outcomes from the Signature Learning program commitment to information literacy and truth-seeking:

SLO 2: Students articulate and apply the skills of a liberal education.

SLO 3: Students apply strategies to critically evaluate, process, and synthesize information.

SLO 11: Students identify and demonstrate the ethical and legal implications of communicating information content.

The lead submit unit for the All In Challenge, the Office of Student and Community Engagement (SCE), was formed in 2011 to bridge the co-curricular experiences of students both on and off campus. The SCE serves as a hub for community engagement, and leads and assists with both curricular and co-curricular community and civic engagement. The SCE is led by four learning outcomes:

- Students interpret personal interests, values, and identities.
- Students build an inclusive community which respects the human dignity of others.
- Students articulate the value of their Capital experience.
- Students utilize their leadership skills to affect positive change in their personal and professional pursuits.

Members of the SCE, along with faculty and staff from across campus, serve together as a Community Engagement (CE) Community of Practice under the umbrella of Signature Learning. The (CE) Community of Practice identifies and shares best practices for curricular and co-curricular community engaged learning activities and serves as a resource for university and community members interested in developing partnerships.

In 2017, Capital launched the Bonner Leader Program, which works to intentionally connect students to the communities surrounding campus to make a sustainable impact with our neighbors. This program is designed to provide students with “access to education and an opportunity to serve.” The hallmarks of the program include:

- Attracting and providing a purpose-driven college education for students who have a demonstrated interest in community engagement and social justice.
- Engaging student talents and leadership in brightening lives and strengthening communities.
- Building the skills and commitment to continue to be lifelong agents of community development.
- Developing life and professional skills that are broadly transferable in living, working, and leading.
- Becoming part of a diverse national network of individuals and organizations through which students will learn and grow
- Energizing a culture of community engagement, inspiring and engaging many in making significant contributions in the local community.

Landscape

Capital University’s commitment to positive civic engagement is evident from the University mission statement down through the programs that directly support this work. While departmental learning outcomes across campus have not been analyzed, a cross-university team, from many departments, disciplines, and student groups, shows the commitment spans the institution.

The 2018 National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) shows great growth in our campus community’s civic engagement. In the 2018 mid-term elections, 47.7 percent of Capital students voted, up 28.3 percent from 2014, and 8.6 percent higher than the 2018 voting rate for all institutions. Additionally, in every category measured by the NSLVE, Capital students showed growth from 2014 to 2018 (See Figure 2). Even though these vast improvements have been made, there is still far more progress that can be made.

	2014	2018	Change
Total student enrollment	3,439	3,190 ↓	-249
Age under 18/Unknown	*	(11)	
IPEDS estimated non-resident aliens	(53)	(65)	
FERPA records blocked	(13)	*	
Total eligible voters	3,365	3,110 ↓	-255
Number of students who registered	2,483	2,559 ↑	76
Number of students who voted	651	1,483 ↑	832
Registration rate	73.8%	82.3% ↑	8.5
Voting rate of registered students	26.2%	58.0% ↑	31.7
Voting rate	19.4%	47.7% ↑	28.3
Difference from all institutions	-0.3	+8.6	

Figure 2

NSLVE Voting Data for Capital University

The 2019 National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) data indicate Capital University could add additional programming and support around some aspects of Civic Engagement, particularly as shaped by the instances to interact with diverse others and perspectives. Table 1 (below) shows the differences in first year (FY) results from 2018 and 2019 and senior year (SY) results from 2018 and 2019 respectively. The difference in the two years is shown as well. In the difference column, highlighting shows where scores improved (green), remained the same (yellow), or went down (red) from 2019 back to 2018. One area for first year students and one area for senior year students were lower in 2019 than in 2018, respectively. Moreover, the data show the scores to be fairly consistent in each question, for both first year and senior students, where ideally, we would hope to see some growth in the score between the two data sets.

Table 1

NSSE comparative data

Question	FY 2019	FY 2018	DIFF	SY 2019	SY 2018	DIFF
How often...connected your learning to societal problems or issues	2.70	2.70	0.00	3.00	3.00	0.00
How often...included diverse perspectives in class discussions or writing assignments	2.80	2.80	0.00	2.90	2.90	0.00
How often...examined the strengths and weaknesses of your own views on a topic or issue	2.80	2.90	(0.10)	3.00	3.00	0.00
How often...tried to better understand someone else's views by imagining how an issue looks from his or her perspective	3.00	3.00	0.00	3.10	3.10	0.00
How often...learned something that changed the way you understand an issue or concept	2.90	2.90	0.00	3.00	2.90	0.10
Coursework emphasis...forming a new idea or understanding from various pieces of information	3.00	2.80	0.20	3.00	2.80	0.20

About how often...people of a race or ethnicity other than your own	3.10	3.10	0.00	3.10	3.10	0.00
About how often...people from an economic background other than your own	3.10	3.10	0.00	3.20	3.10	0.10
About how often...people with religious beliefs other than your own	3.10	3.10	0.00	3.10	3.10	0.00
About how often...people with political views other than your own	3.00	3.00	0.00	3.10	3.10	0.00
Institutional emphasis...attending events that address important social, economic, or political issues	2.60	2.60	0.00	2.40	2.50	(0.10)
How much has your experience at this institution contributed...developing or clarifying a personal code of values and ethics	2.80	2.80	0.00	3.10	3.00	0.10
How much has your experience at this institution contributed...understanding people of other backgrounds	2.90	2.80	0.10	3.00	3.00	0.00
How much has your experience at this institution contributed...solving complex real-world problems	2.70	2.70	0.00	3.00	2.90	0.10
How much has your experience at this institution contributed...being an informed and active citizen	2.70	2.70	0.00	2.90	2.80	0.10

Short-term Goals

Goal	2014	2018	2020
Increase overall voting rate	19.4%	47.7%	63%
Increase first year voting rate	8.3%	35.2%	50%
Participation by each athletic team through that team's choice (ie: social media, game day announcement/event, etc)	n/a	n/a	100%
Robust programming calendar including Constitution Day, National Voter Registration Day, Debate watch parties, Election night gatherings, etc. (specific events TBD when Capital's 20FA plans are in place)	n/a	n/a	10 events minimum

Strategy, Reporting, Evaluation

We will rely on our cross-university team to achieve the outlined goals. While leadership in the ALL IN Challenge will be centralized in the committee, all members of the campus community

will have opportunities to participate throughout the academic year. The committee will work together, mid-summer, to initiate a planning process based on the campus plan for Fall 2020, given the uncertain circumstances surrounding COVID-19. We will share updates with the Capital University community, our Ohio Athletic Conference colleagues, and other stakeholders as appropriate, certainly at the end of the Fall 2020 semester, but throughout the initiative as well. Our voting rates will be evaluated using the NSLVE report and we will categorize events for Fall 2020, specifically around civic engagement, voter turnout, and voter education to assess our completion of the programmatic goals.

Closing

Capital University is excited to build on its rich history of voter engagement through the 2020 All In Challenge. At a time when engagement among college-age voters is low, we are encouraged that our students' registration and voting percentages are above average, however, we are dedicated to promoting voter engagement in our campus community to allow our students to become active, engaged citizens throughout their lives.