



LA ROCHE
UNIVERSITY

ALL IN Campus
Democracy
Challenge



La Roche University 2024 Nonpartisan Democratic Engagement Action Plan

Executive Summary:

This nonpartisan democratic engagement action plan was developed by La Roche University in Pennsylvania 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 La Roche University for the 2024 election are to create opportunities for students to discuss the upcoming election, get students engaged in the election, get students registered to vote and ultimately have students vote in this election. The campaign is called "Resources for Redhawks, Get to the Polls!". This work will be completed through collaboration with multiple offices on campus including Student Life, Student Development, Student Organizations, Campus Ministry, Athletics, Diversity and Inclusion, faculty members and Student Government Association. La Roche will partner with the American Association of University Women (AAUW), the League of Women Voters, the All-IN Campus Democracy Challenge and the Campus Vote Project to assist in a variety of ways. The campaign will market to students by having on campus opportunities for voter registration, a website portal for students to access information and get direct links for voting registration, and a social media component. Flyers, posters, and displays will be set up on campus throughout the fall semester.

Leadership:

“Resources for Redhawks, Get to the Polls!” will be spearheaded by a collaboration of offices on campus. The staff members will work closely with students to connect a variety of campus stakeholders.

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

Colleen Ruefle, Vice President for Student Life and Dean of Students
Steve Benson, Assistant Director for Civic Engagement and Service
Veronica Philip, Director for the Center for Student Life
Patrick Bussiere, Director of Housing and Residence Life
Dave Siroki, Director of Web Services
Katherine Golebie, Associate Athletic Director
Janine Molinaro, Ph.D. Professor and Chair, English
Joshua Forrest, Ph.D., Professor and Chair, Political Science
Christina Nchama Owono, President of Student Government Association
Matt Mars, Vice President of Student Government Association.
Julie Makuta, Executive Assistant for Student Life
Sarah White, Executive Director for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
American Association of University Women
The League of Women Voters
Campus Vote Project

Commitment:

We have received support from campus offices and organizations in our efforts. Our University President, Dr. Christina Clark has demonstrated ongoing and consistent efforts to champion civic engagement. She included a message in her Convocation remarks at the opening of the academic year as well as in her Opening Assembly remarks to faculty and staff. She has signed the Higher Education Presidents’ Commitment to Full Student Voter Participation.

Additionally, La Roche’s Vice President of student Life, Colleen Ruefle routinely issues emails to the entirety of the student body, faculty and staff highlight events pertaining to civic engagement including directions to our website and “Resources for Redhawks, Get to the Polls!”.

Faculty have been effective in exhibiting the importance of voter engagement across the campus. Faculty members have spoken at Student Government Association meetings regarding the importance of civic engagement and voting. Other faculty members have hosted events of campus regarding the election process and allowed for important dialogue within their classrooms.

Landscape:

Pennsylvania elections require U.S. citizens to be a resident of Pennsylvania and of the county where they intend to vote for at least 30 days before the election. Voters must be registered to vote at least 15 days before the election. Registration to vote can happen on-line, by mail, or in person.

October 21: Last day to register in person or online.
October 21: Last day to register by mail—must be received by.

October 29: Last day to request a ballot by mail—must be received by.
November 5: Return ballot by mail—must be received by November 5 by 8pm.
November 5: Return ballot in person: November 5 by 8pm.
November 5: In person voting

LOCAL POLLING LOCATION:

Drop off ballot location: North Park, Allegheny County.

La Roche University is a private 4-year Catholic institution and joined the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge in 2020. Our institution is designated as the following: Predominantly white, suburban campus.

1139 FTE students
790 full time undergraduates
17% minority
16% international
934 students from Pennsylvania

La Roche University has 1,292 students.

Goals:

To increase voter registration: Aim to boost voter registration by organizing outreach events, partnering with local organizations and utilizing social media campaigns to raise awareness about the registration process.

To enhance voter turnout: Increase voter turnout in the upcoming November election by implementing targeted voter engagement initiatives including providing information on voting locations and mail in voting options, offering transportation assistance on election day, and hosting discussions about the importance of voting.

To increase civic education related to local, state, and federal policies and elections.

The national campus voter turnout rate in 2020 was 66%
The national campus voter registration rate in 2020 was 83%

La Roche has authorized NSLVE to receive campus voting data in 2024.

To have our president sign the ALL IN Higher Education President's Commitment to Full Student Voter Participation.

Strategy:

La Roche University will implement a variety of ways to increase nonpartisan democratic engagement and student voter participation. Part of the 'Resources for Redhawks, Get to the Polls!' strategy is to provide voter education through in-person events, social media, website, emails and through collaborations with campus and community partners. We plan to be more intentional about engaging stakeholders and building a strong civic community throughout the 2024 election cycle. Strategies include:

- Creating a Website 'Resources for Redhawks, Get to the Polls!' www.laroche.edu/GetToThePolls/. The website will include important dates, links for voting registration and a toolkit that includes quick links for students regarding the election process in the U.S.
- Collaborating with senior administrators to ensure that our efforts reach as broad an audience as possible.
- Including Voting resources as a part of the annual clubs and organizations fair in September.
- Recognizing special civic days like National Voter Registration Day on September 17, National Voter Education Week October 7 -11.
- Offering Presidential and Vice Presidential Debate Watch Parties.
- Planning a trivia night for students regarding the U.S. Constitution and the election process.
- Inviting community organizations to campus to assist in getting students to register.
- Planning two forums for students led by faculty members on the upcoming election.
- Creating a Social Media campaign around voting.
- Transporting students to local polling places on November 5
- Creating a master engagement plan to ensure succession planning as individuals leave the institution.
- Planning programs in collaboration with Resident Assistants in the residence halls.
- Having La Roche's President sign the All In Higher Education President's Commitment.
- Having Athletic coaches sign the Coaches' Voter Registration and Engagement Pledge.
- Utilizing the PA Department of State Ready to Vote toolkit that provides graphics and posters

Evaluation:

We will evaluate our action plan in the following ways:

La Roche will conduct pre and post assessments of events and activities to ensure that the strategies being implemented get assessed and implemented and gauge the effectiveness and efficiency of the civic engagement plan.

A final survey will be sent to the entire La Roche community at the end of the election cycle. The goal is to explore the impact of the action plan on creating a healthy democratic culture at La Roche University.

La Roche has authorized the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement. The leadership team will review the initial data to explore further ways to impact the non-partisan voting engagement of our students.

Reporting:

The NSLVE report and Civic Engagement Action Plan will be available on the 'Resources for Redhawks, Get to the Polls!' website. Reporting will also be shared with the All-IN Challenge website.

The leadership team will share information to the La Roche Campus Community on efforts and results of the 2024 election cycle.