SUNY CORTLAND

2024 ACTION PLAN

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SUNY CORTLAND
2024 Action Plan

I. ___Executive Summary___

1. ***Who Developed this Action Plan?*** Our Action Plan, *Dragons for Democracy,* was guided by the college's Institute for Civic Engagement (ICE) director, John Suarez, in collaboration with Fred Pierce (Communications Director), Dr. Mary Schlarb (Assistant Vice Provost for Student Achievement), Dr. Stuart Daman (Director, Institutional Research and Assessment), and with our Dragons for Democracy Working Group members. (SUNY Cortland students and employees are *Red Dragons.*)

2. ***Why is your institution invested in creating a plan to map out civic learning and democratic engagement efforts?***
We are invested in creating this plan for two reasons:
(1) It enacts our mission of educating students for engaged citizenship, and
(2) It can help us connect academic coursework and co-curricular activities to civil civic decision-making (which includes, but is not limited to, voting).

   a. ***How does this plan tie to broader institutional norms/values/strategic plans?***
This plan reflects our guiding documents, this line from our mission statement:
   [SUNY Cortland] students grow as engaged citizens with a strong social conscience fostered by outstanding teaching, scholarship and service.
The plan connects to our (under revision) strategic plan, which lists objectives that include –
   - "Promote faculty engagement in the life of the college and in their respective disciplines." Our plan builds on this objective in its professional development component, including –
     o Our Cortland Applied Learning Practitioners *Democracy Engagement Fellows* program.
     o Our Heterodox Academy (HxA) *Campus Community,* which is a network of campuses that embodies HxA's tagline, "Great Minds Don't Always Think Alike."
     o Our May 30 *Civic Learning and Engagement through the Lens of Racial Equity* full day workshop, conducted by Dr. John Reiff, a Campus Compact Engagement and Equity Fellow.
   - "Expand the impact of applied learning by increasing opportunities and increasing the quality of experiences." In addition to the professional development opportunities named above,
     o Our Career Services and Institute for Civic Engagement promote applied learning opportunities for students, including internships and service-learning.
     o The SUNY *Journal of the Scholarship of Engagement* (JoSE) offers faculty and students the opportunity to submit scholarship on democracy engagement.
   - "Strengthen our community through a focus on inclusion, civility, and accountability."
Departments, offices, and student clubs collaborate to reach this objective. For example,
     o Our Multicultural Life and Diversity Office, Antiracism Task Force, and the Institute for Civic Engagement are collaborating to support the workshop named above.
     o Also, Student Affairs and Academic Affairs departments partner with student clubs such as the Black Student Union to conduct educational events for students.

3. ***Where will this action plan be implemented? For instance, provide the following details: name of the institution, the number of campuses the work will take place at, campus locations (city and state), in-person, online, hybrid.***
The Plan will be implemented at SUNY Cortland's one campus (which is in central New York State) under the leadership of the Institute for Civic Engagement. Our working group is helping to refine and enact the plan; our work will be hybrid.

4. ***When does this action plan start and end?***
The plan has already begun, with planning underway for
- Programs (such as the Cortland Applied Learning Practitioners *Democracy Engagement Fellows,*
- Activities such as a March 21, 2024, *State of Poverty* simulation
- Events such as Dr. Reiff's full-day May 30, 2024, workshop.

The plan ends in June 2026, by which time, for example –
- Student voting rates should be at least 90%.
- Democracy engagement networking, programming, events, and activities for faculty and students will be regularly scheduled. These include
  - o A network of college offices and organizations and community partners will have been conducting voter registration, voter education, and voter turnout events and activities.
  - o The CALP *Democracy Engagement Fellows* Program.
- We will have revised our plan for the next four years.
  - a. ***How does this action plan focus on both short-term and long-term goals?***
    This plan's short-term goals build an "infrastructure" of academic and co-curricular programming that provide the rationale for, and practice in democracy engagement. Three related examples are
    - The Institute for Civic Engagement's Cortland Applied Learning Practitioners *Democracy Engagement Fellowships* which will raise the number of democracy engagement-oriented courses, justifying –
    - The establishment of a "CL" *(civic learning)* and a "DE" *(democracy engagement)* attribute through the Registrar's Office. With the acknowledgement of the importance and pervasiveness of civic learning and democracy engagement in our curricula, we can take another step –
    - Adding, to the faculty handbook, recognition (for retention, tenure, and promotion) of faculty members who incorporate civic learning and democracy engagement into their work.

    Together, these actions and goals create an infrastructure, a culture of democracy engagement that includes, but is not limited to, voting.
  - b. ***When will it be updated?***
    The plan will be updated at the end of each academic year, after data are collected. The working group and the Institute's Advisory Council will help assess and update the plan. We expect major changes by the fourth year.

5. ***How will this action plan be implemented? Who's in charge? What unit/office/division will be facilitating the effort?***   Our Institute for Civic Engagement (ICE) will implement the Plan in collaboration with the action plan's working group and with the help of the Institute's Advisory Council.

6. ***What strategies were employed to make sure that this plan was equitable and included a diverse audience?***
The working group includes staff on our Multicultural Diversity and Inclusion Office, as well as our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Office. Those individuals, along with notes from Campus Compact workshops, have helped ensure equity-oriented content and goals for people from, and for people unfamiliar with, marginalized communities.

Part of our diverse audience includes people who are not "members of the choir": Faculty and staff members who might consider DEI to be a non-issue for their department. In many DEI and democracy engagement professional development events, participants tend to be people who already have at least some degree of expertise in the field. To broaden our base of support, we are reaching out to individuals who have avoided such professional development.

II. Leadership.

1. ***Who are the working group members and how are they involved?***

The working group members, and their roles, are

Students –
- Mackenzie Carroll (Institute for Civic Engagement Action Democracy Engagement Team intern) is a Performing Arts major who is developing participatory dance activity as a way of helping students learn active listening skills.
- Vanessa Costanza (President, BridgeCortland) develops constructive disagreement programming for students. One example is the *Bridge the Gap* events, in which students share – in civil ways – contrasting points of view on five major current issues.

Faculty members –
- Jill Murphy (Chair, Health, is on sabbatical – but continues to be active in this work)
- Eric Edlund (Chair, Physics) helps with faculty recruitment and with constructive disagreement programming.

Staff members –
- Katrina Hodge (Assistant Director, Multicultural Life and Diversity Office) helps recruit students for this plan's projects and events.
- Michelle LoGerfo (Assistant Director, Web and Digital Marketing) helps with promoting the plan and its projects and events.

Administrators –
- Fred Pierce (Director, Communications Office) will help craft messaging regarding events that explore very sensitive topics.
- Mary Schlarb (Assistant Director, Student Success) helps
  - o Recruit faculty to the plan.
  - o Assess progress.
  - o Guide development of key parts of the plan, such as
    - – The Democracy Engagement attribute.
    - – The Civic Learning Microcredential.
    - – Incorporating democracy engagement into retention, tenure, and promotion decisions.

Community partners
- Cathy Bischoff (Cortland County Legislator, Democrat) is helping to
  - o Create activities that demonstrate, to our students, the importance of local politics.
  - o Recruit community members to our events.

  One example is a spring 2024 project for the Alpha Sigma Alpha sorority. Bischoff and other elected officials will
    - – Describe the relevance of local news and elections to SUNY Cortland students.
    - – Help the sorority sisters develop a community project that involves participation with local government officials.
- Hailie Addison (National Program Manager, BridgeUSA) helps design constructive disagreement programming, especially in collaboration with BridgeCortland students.
- Kimberly Cameron and Sheila Cohen (Co-Presidents, League of Women Voters, Cortland County) design civic learning events, such as *Meet the Candidates* and get-out-the-vote activities for campus.
- Marissa Pappas (Project Coordinator, NYPIRG) conducts voter education, voter registration, and get-out-the-vote activities.
- Scott Steve and Tom Michales (City of Cortland Mayor and Deputy Mayor, Republicans) help

- Plan, conduct, and participate in events that help students understand the value of participating in local civic decision-making.
- Recruit community members to our events.

How is the working group ensuring there is diversity within the campus' voting coalition?
The working group represents a variety of groups in our campus' demography.

a. What senior administration leaders (e.g., college president, provost, dean of students) are involved, and what role do they play?
SUNY Cortland President Erik J. Bitterbaum is a vocal champion of democracy engagement, often speaking of "stewardship of place," among other considerations in democracy engagement.

President Bitterbaum and members of his leadership team have strongly supported the Cortland Votes effort, which works with community partners to establish a culture of voting on campus. In fall 2023, Cortland Votes evolved into the Dragons for Democracy project.
What role do you wish senior administrative leaders would play on your campus?
I wish that they would promote democracy engagement in academic courses.

b. ***What academic departments and which faculty within academic affairs are involved?***
These individuals contribute to programming and to institutionalizing democracy engagement –
- Dr. Eric Edlund, Chair, Physics Department.
- Dr. Jill Murphy, Chair, Health Department.
- Dr. Mary Schlarb, Assistant Provost for Student Success, Academic Affairs.

c. What units within student affairs are involved and which administrators are involved?
Katrina Hodge, Assistant Director of Multicultural Life and Diversity.

d. Which students and student organizations are involved?
Mackenzie Carroll, Democracy Engagement Action Team intern, Institute for Civic Engagement.
Vanessa Costanzo, President, BridgeCortland (a chapter of BridgeUSA).

e. What community and/or national organizations are involved?
- BridgeUSA – Hailie Addison, National Program Manager.
- City of Cortland – Mayor Scott Steve (R) and Deputy Mayor Thomas Michales (R).
- Cortland County Legislature – Cathy Bischoff (D).
- League of Women Voters, Cortland County – Sheila Cohen and Kimberly Cameron, Co-Presidents.
- New York Public Interest Group – Marissa Pappas, Project Coordinator for SUNY Cortland.
These partners suggest event topics and formats; the League and NYPIRG also conduct events.
How do national and local partners support your institution's efforts?
Our national and local partners help with programming and recruitment.

f. Is the working group coordinating with the local election office? If so, with whom and how?
- The Institute for Civic Engagement invited the Cortland County Board of Elections Commissioners to conduct a spring 2024 and fall 2024 *Voting Security* presentation on campus for SUNY Cortland students, faculty, and staff, *and* for members of the greater Cortland community. One of the Commissioners is out on a medical leave; we will resume our discussion as soon as possible.
- We previously discussed the possibility of SUNY Cortland students serving as poll workers; that idea is currently on hold until the Institute identifies students who are registered to vote as members of one of the two major political parties, who will be in or near Cortland in the summer (when training takes place), and who are interested.

2. *Leadership*
   a. *To whom is this person and/or office held accountable, and what is their reporting line?*

The working group's leader is John Suarez, director of the Institute for Civic Engagement. He reports bi-weekly to Mary Schlarb, Assistant Provost for Student Success.

   b. *If student-staff or community partners are involved, how are they compensated for their involvement?*

Community partners who participate in the Cortland Applied Learning Practitioners (CALP) Democracy Engagement program receive a $500 stipend.

3. *What are working group members' unique strengths and responsibilities?*
Please refer to #1, above.

4. *How will people be brought into the coalition who currently are not there?*
   a. *Why have these individuals/groups been identified to join?*
Suarez will work with
- Assistant Director of Multicultural Life and Diversity Office, Katrina Hodge, to recruit students in Student Government Association clubs such as Black Student Union, NAACP, and La Familia Latina so that they can better appreciate the importance of democracy engagement in their clubs' goals.
- Physics Chair, Eric Edlund, to recruit students in the natural sciences; those students tend to have low participation rates.
- Assistant Director of Student Success, Mary Schlarb, to help faculty understand connections between democracy engagement and students' professional success.

   b. **Which groups have traditionally been underrepresented within your mobilization effort and how does your working group work to strategically involve members of those groups?**

Students from traditionally marginalized populations have been underrepresented; we are working with Multicultural Life to recruit them.

5. *How is the working group inclusive of different campus and community stakeholders?*
The working group includes a diversity of race, political perspective, and disciplinary focus.

6. *Does the working group have the support of upper administrators (e.g., president, provost, VPSA) who can help advocate on behalf of the working group?*
Yes, including President Bitterbaum, Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs Ann McClellan, and Vice President for Student Affairs, Greg Sharer, support this work

7. *What other offices on campus need to be involved (e.g. website or portal management, registrar, university relations)?*
Institute for Civic Engagement director John Suarez has begun working more closely with Institutional Research and Assessment (IRA). For example, in early fall 2023, he and IRA Director Stuart Daman set a schedule by which IRA will email the Institute preliminary data toward the end of the academic year so that Suarez can use those data in his annual report. When Daman's data collection and analysis are completed, he will send Suarez those confirmed data for use in tracking progress in this action plan.

8. *How often will the working group meet and communicate? Identify who is responsible for communicating among the group and how the group will meet.*
The working group's coordinator, Suarez, will update the group monthly, with requests for questions, comments, and suggestions.

9. *How are you keeping working group members engaged over time and addressing stakeholder turnover?*

I have planned regularly-scheduled updates and requests for questions and suggestions, along with requests for updates on members' changed responsibilities.

10. ***If someone in the working group stops showing up and doing the work or needs to step away, what steps will be taken to ensure the efforts continue?***

With a large working group, projects have more than one member, so progress can continue while we recruit another member.

11. ***What is your leadership succession plan?***

Mary Schlarb and John Suarez are working on a succession plan.

Is leading this work part of someone's job description?

Yes: The Director of the Institute for Civic Engagement, John Suarez.

How will this work continue if key leaders change roles or leave the institution?

We are working to incorporate democracy engagement into the college's strategic plan so that this work will continue, even with changes in key leadership positions.

III. Commitment

1. ***How does the mission and vision of your campus align with your work to increase student voter engagement in our democracy?***

The mission and vision align through our work in voter registration, voter education, and voter turnout, as well as through our roughly 200 applied learning courses (considering democracy engagement in education as an experiential process).

2. ***How does the institution and its leadership demonstrate commitment to improve civic learning and democratic engagement?***

The institution and its leadership demonstrate this commitment through the financial support of the Institute for Civic Engagement and through its support of Student Affairs' leadership programming.

Also, SUNY Cortland's Communications Office regularly issues news releases related to voter participation, critical thinking about important issues and constructive dialogue. Some examples from the last academic year:

SUNY Cortland recognized for engaged student voting

Community roundtable to promote Democratic engagement

Four universities to mark Constitution Day

SUNY Cortland leans into community action

SUNY Cortland named AmeriCorps School of Service

Cortland joins nationwide effort to save local journalism

All SUNY Cortland news releases are sent to local and regional news outlets for publication to the general public, posted on the university website and shared through campus social media. Each release is communicated with students, faculty and staff through the Bulletin, a bi-weekly email newsletter, and frequently to alumni through our bi-weekly alumni newsletter and social media channels.

Is there an explicit, visible commitment to the part of the governing board, president, and senior leadership?

Yes. This commitment is demonstrated by our mission statement: *SUNY Cortland is an academic community dedicated to diverse learning experiences. Students grow as* <u>*engaged citizens*</u> *with a strong social conscience fostered by outstanding teaching, scholarship and service.* [Underline added.]

Also –

- Our institution's leadership demonstrates that commitment through its continuing support of this kind of work –
  - President Erik Bitterbaum is a
    - Signatory to the All In Campus Democracy Challenge's Commitment to Full Student Voting.
    - Signatory to the Civic Learning and Democracy Engagement Coalition's *Shared Commitment Statement,* and is a CLDE partner.
    - Signatory to the AASCU's *Commitment to its American Democracy Project* (ADP), which commits SUNY Cortland to nonpartisan democracy engagement.
    - Supporter of SUNY Cortland's Heterodox Academy *Campus Community* membership.
    - Member of the national Campus Compact.
  - Provost Ann McClennan's office supports the Institute for Civic Engagement and has worked with students to support their initiative in democracy engagement activities, such as recently helping four students start their own politically-oriented club.
  - Institutional Planning and Assessment Committee funds the five ImPACt scholarships.
- The Director of Institutional Advancement, Rich Coyne, encourages alumni to support democracy engagement projects and programs. For example –
  - He and his staff helped generate alumni funding for six Civic engagement scholarships. One of these has multiple awards).
  - He garnered financial backing for the Cortland Applied Learning Practitioners (CALP) focus on democracy engagement, beginning in spring 2024. CALP is the Institute's professional development program for faculty and staff who use applied learning in their courses.
- Students are required to take the general education *United States History and Society* course*,* which teaches democratic engagement.
- The Institute's director
  - Collaborated with the coordinator of Secondary Education, History to design the SUNY Cortland Civic Readiness microcredential. They will request adoption of the microcredential in spring 2024, when the college's new micro-credentialing process is formalized.
  - Is faculty advisor for BridgeCortland, a chapter of the nationwide organization BridgeUSA.
  - Conducts National Issues Forums Institute (NIFI)-based deliberative dialogues, and has coached interns as they design and conduct their own locally-focused, NIFI-modelled dialogues.
- SUNY Cortland faculty, staff, and students partner with local elected officials from both major political parties on the Town Gown Steering Committee to collaborate on civic engagement projects. Members include –
  - The mayor and deputy mayor (Republican).
  - Two Alderpersons (Democrat).
  - The president and vice president of SUNY Cortland's SGA.
  - Director of SUNY Cortland's Communications Office.
  - Assistant Director of Student Life.
  - Director of the Institute for Civic Engagement.
- SUNY Cortland's Communications Office promotes and reports on engagement-related, college-sponsored events. Please refer to #III. 2., above, for details.

a. ***Is the commitment communicated within the institution? To whom, specifically, and how?***

The commitment is communicated in a variety of ways, including in institutional guiding documents and in the messaging and actions of administrators, faculty, staff, and students:

<u>Documents</u> – Civic engagement is named in our mission statement, and applied (experiential) learning is listed as a strategic goal.

Faculty reinforce this commitment through their courses and other work –

- Dr. Christine Knopf incorporates deliberative dialogues (as a way of having students practice constructive disagreement skills) in all her courses because, she notes, "it is central to human communication." Those courses include *Human Communication, Fundamentals of Public Speaking, Interpersonal Communication, Organizational Communication, Introduction to Media Literacy, and Communication in Social Change.* These courses stretch from 100- to 400-level courses.
- Professor Jared McBrady, Coordinator of Secondary Education, History, conducts "Hot Moments" activities in which future teachers learn how to engage in civil and productive discussion of contentious issues, whether with their students or with adults. This is important around issues such as Critical Race Theory, among others.
- Study Abroad programs in Health (two) and in Recreation/Parks/Leisure Studies (RPLS) address civic learning and democracy engagement. For example, students in the RPLS *Ecotourism* study abroad course practice civic skills identified in the AAC&U's *A Crucible Moment.*
- In fall 2023, faculty and staff launched the SUNY Cortland Heterodox Academy *Campus Community* as a way of learning about, and modelling, constructive disagreement as a critical democracy engagement skill.
- The Institute for Civic Engagement and SUNY Cortland administration and faculty conduct voter education events. For example, the Institute for Civic Engagement conducted –

Participatory Constitution Day events
- o Two participatory *Your Right to Petition the Government* Constitution Day events in 2023, each of which included representatives from both major political parties.
  - One was a Zoom-based event as a member of the SUNY+ Team (of five SUNY campuses and the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education).
  - A tailored in-person version of this event two days later. Participants included the City of Cortland's Republican Mayor and Deputy Mayor, two Democratic Cortland County legislators, the Chair of SUNY Cortland's *Africana Studies* Department, the CEO of BridgeUSA, two former Institute for Civic Engagement *Action Team* interns, each of whom is still involved in civic engagement activities, and six students – one Sport Management major and five Secondary Education History majors.
- o A Zoom-based 2022 *Freedom of Speech* Constitution Day event as part of the SUNY+ Team.

Panel discussions
- o Two democracy engagement-focused food insecurity panel discussions with community partners, including a representative of a local elected New York State official who outlined best practices for collaborating with government officials to address an issue. October 2023.
- o Organized and moderated the *Great Expectations* Conference panel discussion, *Adding Career- and Civics-Learning to SLO's.* May 2023. Panelists were Career Services Director Nan Pasquarello, City of Cortland Mayor Scott Steve, and Professor Tracy Hudson (Physical Education).
- o Organized and moderated the *Getting Cortland County More Democratically Engaged* Community Roundtable. October 2022. Panelists were Cortland County legislator Cathy

Bischoff, City of Cortland Mayor Scott Steve, and Cortland County League of Women Voters' President, Sheila Cohen.

o Organized and moderated the *Getting Cortland County More Democratically Engaged* Sandwich Seminar. September 2022. Panelists were Cortland County legislator Doug Bentley, City of Cortland Mayor Scott Steve, and Cortland County League of Women Voters' President, Sheila Cohen.

Applied learning- and democracy engagement-related class presentations and other student work.

o Organized presentations for Margaret Gichuru's three sections of *Children, Families and their Community* (EDU 333). The November 2022 event included nonprofit supervisors' presentations; the November 2023 event focused on the role of active listening in civic action to address education issues.

o Designed and conducted a constructive disagreement activity for a *Justice and Society* (POL 470) class meeting. September 2023.

o Facilitated an active listening workshop for Jim Hokanson's *Pre-Internship Seminar in Fitness Development* (EXS 371). September 2022.

o Moderated an applied learning/civic readiness discussion for Jeremiah Zhe-Heimerman's COR 101 class (Poli Sci majors). September 2022.

o Presented a lesson on the role of civic engagement in US society for Chungse Jung's SOC 350 class. November 2022.

o Facilitated an active listening workshop for Student Affairs' *Leadership Program.* March 2022.

o Partnered with Eric Edlund (Chair, Physics) to recruit and coach two students to re-start the College Republicans club. Edlund offered to serve as the club's advisor. Although the club did not restart, the number of students signing the petition of support suggested a high degree of student interest in learning different points of view on issues.

Students

- BridgeCortland (SGA club whose faculty advisor is the Institute for Civic Engagement's director) conducted events such as
  o *Bridging the Divide* events (which help students practice civil discourse around divisive issues), fall 2021 to present.
  o *A large-group discussion entitled, "Is Social Media a Threat to Our Democracy"? (spring 2023)*
  o The *Responding to Gun Violence"* large-group discussion, with a WebEx-based presentation by Dr. Jacklyn Schildkraut (SUNY Oswego, Criminal Justice; Interim Director of the Rockerfeller Institute Regional Gun Violence Research Consortium). Students collaborated with the President of the Student Activities Board and the President of the SUNY Cortland Emergency Medical Team (SGA club) to organize this event shortly after a mass shooting (spring 2023).
- A fall 2023 Institute for Civic Engagement *Action Team* (self-directed) intern is designing a dance-based active listening activity that focuses on the importance of nonverbal communication. It includes audience participation.
- In fall 2022, two Institute for Civic Engagement *Action Team* self-directed interns designed and conducted NIFI-modelled deliberative dialogues –
  o *Back to Work: How should we rebuild the economy of a small rural city?* November 2022. Among the participants were a local business leader and the chair of our Economics Department (Dr. Benjamin Wilson) who, as a result of this event, revised his spring 2023 *Urban Economics* into a service-learning course.

- o *Policing: What should we do to ensure fair treatment and keep neighborhoods safe for everyone, including police?* A local police official helped the intern compose this event's participant guide.
- Another intern conducted a survey of SUNY Cortland students' actions and opinions regarding voting. Results from this survey are helping the Institute tailor its –
- o Messaging.
- o Event formatting.
- o Professional development for faculty, especially with regard to generating student interest and participation in civic decision-making. For example, students need –
  - – More "concrete," personal reasons for learning about an issue, and they
  - – To feel agency, to feel that they *can* "make a difference."

b. ***Is the commitment communicated outside the institution? To whom, specifically, and how?***

- The college's online *Bulletin* shares democracy engagement work of students, faculty, and staff. For example,
  - o 13 September 2022 – Promoting a series of presentations on *The Culture of Truth,* sponsored by the Sociology/Anthropology's *Roseann Brooks Museum.*
  - o 22 November 2022 – SUNY Cortland's receipt of the *All In Most Engaged Campus for College Student Voting* Award.
  - o 24 January 2023 – SUNY Cortland students' research into under-reported deaths of off-shore oil rig workers. Their reporting was shared nationally over the nonprofit organization, *Project Censored.*
- SUNY Cortland's official website includes a [page devoted to voter registration](#) and links to additional election information.
- The college's Institute for Civic Engagement shares its civic engagement Newsletter with the campus and with community partners. The newsletter has focused increasingly on democracy engagement, with its November 2023 issue dedicated to that effort.
- Each April, the Institute gives *Leadership in Civic Engagement* awards to deserving individuals and groups from on- and off-campus. As of spring 2023, this recognition now includes a new *Civic Leadership*. Among the first awardees were Professor and Diversity Fellow Tracy Hudson (Physical Education), Kevin Mack (Education, retired but still active), two students, the Deputy Mayor, and the Chair of the Republican Party of Cortland County (in recognition of her wide-ranging participation in Cortland County civic life).

c. **Does the institution's commitment to civic learning and democratic engagement consider diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice tenets?**

Yes. For example,

- Our School of Education's Foundations and Social Advocacy Program conducts *its Cortland's Urban Recruitment of Educators* Program, which "aims to reverse this trend [of few students of color becoming teachers] by providing scholarship support ($4,000 per year for up to 4 years) and programming to qualified students [representing a wide variety of backgrounds who are] interested in becoming teachers."
- Another example is from our inter-office collaborations. In one case, the Institute for Civic Engagement partnered with the Antiracism Taskforce's *Educational Programming Subcommittee* to arrange, with funding from our Institutional Equity and Inclusion office, a May 30, 2024, *Civic Learning and Engagement Through a Lens of Racial Equity* full-day workshop facilitated by Dr. John Reiff, Director of Civic Learning and Civic Engagement, Massachusetts Department of Higher Education, and a Campus Compact *Equity and Engagement Fellow*.

d. **Has the institution's senior leadership (e.g., president, provost, chancellor) made an outward commitment to democratic engagement? For instance, signing the All In President's Commitment to Full Student Voter Participation?**

Yes:

- President Erik J. Bitterbaum is a
  - ○ Signatory to the All In Campus Democracy Challenge's Commitment to Full Student Voting.
  - ○ Signatory to the Civic Learning and Democracy Engagement Coalition's *Shared Commitment Statement,* and a CLDE partner.
  - ○ Signatory to the AASC&U's American Democracy Project (ADP) Commitment.
  - ○ Supporter of SUNY Cortland's Heterodox Academy *Campus Community* membership.
  - ○ Member of the national Campus Compact.
- Administration considers student democracy engagement a part of student success, so the Institute for Civic Engagement's director reports biweekly to Mary Schlarb, Assistant Vice Provost for Student Success. Dr. Schlarb is also a member of the Working Group.

e. *If your campus is part of a system of campuses, is there an outward commitment to democratic engagement from that level?*

Yes: The SUNY System is currently accepting applications for its new *Civic Education and Engagement and Civil Discourse Fellows* Program –

- Ten faculty/staff members from across the System's 64 campuses will be selected to "support peers in strategies to boost civic education and engagement, [and] implement [an] updated General Education Framework."
- The Fellows "will advance SUNY's shared commitment to civic engagement as an essential outcome of higher education and will work to advance civic discourse among students, faculty, and staff across campus communities." SUNY Cortland's director of its Institute for Civic Engagement has submitted his application for a Fellowship.

3. *Is educating for civic learning and democratic engagement a pervasive part of institutional culture? Is it ongoing, consistent, systematic, and sustainable across programs, departments, and the entire institution? How do you know?*

Yes, educating for civic learning and democracy engagement are becoming a pervasive part of our institutional culture, in – for example – co-curricular opportunities, such as in SGA and in certain SGA clubs such as NYPIRG and the Black Student Union.

In addition, offices such as Career Services, Multicultural Life and Diversity Office, International Programs, the Institutional Equity and Inclusion Office, the Migrant Education Program, and others emphasizing civic engagement and the development of global and local citizenship skills and attitudes.

Academic courses provide aspects of a democracy engagement-oriented culture in courses such as *United States History and Society, Political Communication, Introduction to American Government and Politics, Foundations of Democracy, Politics and Multiculturalism, Student Government Practicum,* and *Participation in Politics and Government*.

Additional evidence comes from Administration's continued support of the Institute for Civic Engagement (ICE).

- ICE, with the active engagement of a significant number of faculty and students, embodies the principles of democracy engagement and civic learning. ICE's events, programs, partnerships, and

publications, promote democracy engagement and civic learning across the teaching, service, and research of faculty, staff, and students.

- The Institute for Civic Engagement, funded by the university, conducts the Cortland Applied Learning Practitioners (CALP) professional development program, with support for CALP Fellows' stipends coming from alumni.
- ICE and campus and community partners, including students, regularly offer applied learning (see [here](#) for an example) and democracy engagement events.
- ICE published its *SUNY Cortland Service Learning Manual*, authored by John Suarez and available on the Cortland web site, to support faculty instructions in integrating best practices in integrating service learning activities and pedagogies into their course design and teaching.
- As stated in the [2022 SUNY Cortland Self-Study Report](#) prepared for the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, "ICE strives to increase the number of undergraduate students who are engaged in meaningful civic actions, including a wide range of activities by which they are engaged in the lives of the community, such as community service, participation in the political process, and involvement in advocacy groups."

4. ***How is the institution's commitment reflected in existing statements and documents?***
Our vision statement includes the words, "students graduate with the knowledge, integrity, skills and compassion to excel as leaders, citizens, scholars, teachers and champions of excellence."

Our mission statement reflects our commitment: *SUNY Cortland is an academic community dedicated to diverse learning experiences. Students grow as engaged citizens with a strong social conscience fostered by outstanding teaching, scholarship and service.*

Our 2018-2023 strategic plan includes these objectives –
- "Promote faculty engagement in the life of the college and in their respective disciplines" (#4). This objective connects disciplines' academic content with democracy engagement, which includes the motivational/educational element of applied learning. This, in turn, connects to another objective:
- "Expand the impact of applied learning by increasing opportunities and increasing the quality of experiences" (#6). We consider applied – experiential – learning an essential element in civic learning that leads to democracy engagement. Democracy engagement includes voting, of course, but also skills and dispositions related to constructive disagreement, civil civic decision-making – as noted in the next objective:
- "Strengthen our community through a focus on inclusion, civility, and accountability" (#7).
  Please note: Our Administration is redesigning this strategic plan through a collaborative process of campus-wide meetings and surveys.

  Some faculty and staff members have been promoting the inclusion of democracy engagement into the new strategic plan. On December 11, 2023, Dr. Jill Murphy and John Suarez will meet with the Strategic Plan Development Committee's Co-Chairs (Dr. Lynn MacDonald, Dean, School of Professional Studies) and Dr. Carol Van Der Karr (Vice Provost, Academic Affairs and Institutional Effectiveness) to promote the inclusion, into the new strategic plan, of democracy engagement, including constructive disagreement for SUNY Cortland students and employees.

The Institute for Civic Engagement's mission statement and strategic plan reflect SUNY Cortland's commitment:

Mission Statement: The Institute for Civic Engagement is a Division of Academic Affairs resource for faculty, staff, students, and community partners as they develop, conduct, and assess applied learning (learning-by-doing) projects through which students strengthen their understanding of course content and cultural diversity, sharpen career readiness skills, and develop a disposition of applying their

knowledge and skills to civic decision-making activities, including working with government to address issues that concern them (democracy engagement).

The Institute's unofficial motto is Do Good; Learn Well. The Institute is not a "volunteer" opportunity agency; rather, it focuses on intentional learning by doing, especially in democracy engagement.

The lead sentence for the Institute's strategic plan (titled *Dragons for Democracy)* is, "*Dragons for Democracy* is designed to strengthen students' civic readiness (their understanding of, and skill in, civic decision-making) and their democracy engagement (their motivation to engage in civic decision-making). It values equity, reciprocity, nonpartisanship, and constructive disagreement."

Has the institution created and implemented an action plan in previous years?
Yes.

5. ***What are the institution's overall civic, democratic, and/or political learning outcomes?***
   Is there a process in place to ensure that outcomes are measured and met?
- These principles are embedded into our mission statement: "SUNY Cortland is an academic community dedicated to diverse learning experiences. Students grow as engaged citizens with a strong social conscience fostered by outstanding teaching, scholarship and service." [Emphasis added.] Related institutional priorities identified in the current strategic plan include "expand(ing) the impact of applied learning by increasing opportunities and increasing the quality of experiences;" "strengthen our community through a focus on inclusion, civility, and accountability;" and "promote faculty engagement in the life of the college and in their respective disciplines."
- The university regularly assesses achievement of these outcomes through the strategic planning, institutional self-evaluation, and annual reporting process. We also regularly data from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), administered every three years to first-year and senior students to assess the extent to which students engage in service-learning activities.

6. ***How is educating for civic learning and democratic engagement included in the general education curriculum?***
SUNY Cortland's General Education (GE) Program includes several categories with learning outcomes related to democracy engagement and civic learning. According to our Undergraduate College Catalog, "The purpose of GE is to provide students with an intellectual and cultural basis for their development as informed individuals in our society." While all GE categories are designed with the aim of developing informed citizens, a few in particular focus on learning about civil society, including U.S History and Civic Engagement; Diversity: Equity, Inclusion, and Social Justice; World History and Global Awareness; and Science, Technology, Values, and Society.
- The GE categories are assessed on a four-year cycle according to a GE Assessment Plan, and findings are published.
- Courses featuring applied learning have "AL" attributes, after being vetted for specific course design features and outcomes. ICE Director John Suarez is currently working with the university registrar to develop a process for assign "CL" (civic learning) and "DE" (democracy engagement) attributes for academic courses.
- In addition, academic programs such as Human Service Studies and Community Health include a civic learning components and culminating civic learning internship projects.
- These programs and courses are available to all students. The GE program is, in fact, required of all students.

IV. Landscape

1. ***Are civic learning and democratic engagement overall campus learning objectives? If so, what are the learning outcomes and how are they measured?***

Civic learning and democratic engagement are not yet stated as, nor acted-on as, overall campus learning objectives. We are currently in the process of updating SUNY Cortland's *Strategic Plan,* and faculty/staff such as the Institute's director have promoted the idea of including civic learning and democracy engagement in our new strategic plan.

2. ***Do you have access to assessment data for your campus? If so, what does assessment data show about the political climate and democratic engagement on campus?***

We can and do collect data on curricular and co-curricular activities on campus and the numbers of students and faculty/staff who participate in them. Activities include the many programs and events held on campus and in the community related to democracy engagement (e.g., community roundtables, sandwich seminars, workshops, internships, and student projects).

We have access to National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) and Faculty Survey of Student Engagement (FSSE) data on high-impact practices. FSSE does not, however, provide detailed information on political climate and democracy engagement.

FSEE includes the rate of students' service learning; those data provide some insight into our students' civic learning. The SUNY System categorizes service-learning as one of thirteen kinds of *applied learning.* Through our Registrar, we have an attribute for courses that feature applied learning experiences. We are developing a plan to include *civic learning* and a *democracy engagement* attributes so that we can track these types of coursework experiences more effectively.

Data on one aspect of democracy engagement – voter registration and voting – are through the NSLVE's report, *Student Voting Rates for SUNY College at Cortland*.

Although 2022 NSLVE data show that we lag behind our counterparts in voter registration and voter turnout rates, those rates improved from 2018. We believe that this was due to students' greater interest in our increasingly polarized political atmosphere. For example, our
- Student voter registration rate rose from 77.2% (2018) to 85.4% (2020).
- The voting rate of registered students rose from 24% (2018) to 69.2% (2020).
- Our voting rate for eligible students went from
  - 18.5% (2018) to 59.1% (2020).
  - 6.3% (2014) to 59% (2020).

However, those measures for certain demographics remain concerning. Examples include the 2020 voting rates for students who are Black (50%), Hispanic (55%), Business Economics majors (49%), and in the Physical Sciences (43%).

Anecdotal evidence also suggests an undercurrent of divisiveness in our campus political climate. Identifying and developing measures that provide us with data about the political climate and democracy engagement on campus are areas of further improvement. We will be working on an assessment plan to support this.

How does this data compare to that of peer institutions?

Our 2018 voting rate of 18.5% paled in comparison to the 39.1% rate of all institutions in the NSLVE report. We know that we have work to do.

3. ***How are civic learning and democratic engagement present in the curriculum?***
Our 2023 FSSE-NSSE Combined Report provides results that indicate ways in which civic learning-related skills are present in the curriculum. These percentages, of course, provide each represented population's perception of the extent to which these ways are provided.

Item	Faculty %	Student %
Evaluating a point of view, decision, or information source	48	69
Connect[ing] learning to social problems or issues	52	48
Included diverse perspectives in course discussions or assignments	64	54
Examined the strengths and weaknesses of your own views on a topic or issue	68	59
Tried to better understand someone else's views by imagining how an issue looks from their perspective	60	69
Learned something that changes the way you understand an issue or concept	100	71
Connected ideas from your courses to your prior experiences and knowledge	92	73
Being an informed citizen	44	59

These data suggest that we need to be more intentional in incorporating civic learning and democracy engagement into the curriculum.

a. ***In which courses is it taught?***
b. ***In which courses is it listed as a learning outcome?***
Academic courses provide aspects of a democracy engagement-oriented culture in courses such as *United States History and Society, Political Communication, Introduction to American Government and Politics, Foundations of Democracy, Politics and Multiculturalism, Student Government Practicum,* and *Participation in Politics and Government*.

c. ***Are courses connected to civic learning and democratic engagement available to all students or a particular group of students (e.g., only in-coming first-years, political science majors)?***
They are available to in-coming first-year students and to majors in certain field.

4. ***How are civic learning and democratic engagement present in the co-curriculum?***
Students can participate in civic learning and democratic engagement through their involvement with student organizations and with leadership development opportunities in Campus Activities office. With the clubs, students participate in debates and have educational club meetings (sometimes with guest speakers). Additionally, the SGA funds NYPIRG which helps register students to vote, offers internship opportunities, and works on initiatives in issues such as hunger & homelessness prevention, higher education affordability, environmental protection, voter mobilization, registration, & political engagement, consumer rights & consumer protection, and public health.
a. ***In which departments is this included?***
These opportunities are in Campus Activities, the Student Government Association, and in active listening training conducted by Residence Life for its Resident Assistants.
b. ***What incentives, programs, and activities focus on this?***
Please refer to the answer at #4, immediately above.
c. ***What student groups and clubs are engaged?***
SGA clubs such as BridgeCortland, Black Student Union, and NYPIRG.

5. ***What internal barriers (e.g., limited funding, staff resistance, lack of leadership) prevent the institution from being successful?***

Limited funding and staff resources (time) are the most significant barriers. Faculty members' need to meet rigorous and credit-heavy curricular requirements interferes with us reaching our goals, though we do have our administration's vocal and financial support for this work

Anecdotally, as we emerge from COVID, the level of student engagement and participation in co-curricular activities overall seems to have waned. Some data support this. NSSE data indicate that participation in service learning activities in 2020 was 55%, but declined to 47% in 2023. Internship participation has declined from 87% in 2014 to 74% in 2023.

6. ***What external barriers (e.g., election laws, voter ID laws, lack of proximity to polling location) prevent the institution from being successful?***

Few, if any: Students who live on campus vote at the polling location on campus. Students who live off-campus must travel to an off-campus polling place. Early voting takes place only at the Cortland County Board of Elections, which is two miles away from campus.

7. ***What is the demographic makeup of the institution's student body? How is this information considered when mapping out civic learning and democratic engagement efforts?***

We use the demographic information in the two charts below to design democracy engagement events for populations that demonstrate the greatest need and/or the least participation in democracy engagement. For example, ICE has collaborated for years with our Educational Opportunity Program to recruit students – usually students of color – for its Action Team internships. The ICE director mentors interns as they develop events to help other students of color become democracy engaged. Of our last nine Action Team interns, seven were students of color, and three of those students of color were also Campus Compact Civic Fellows.

We also match data from both of these tables against our NSLVE reports so that we can tailor our efforts to populations and majors who have lower voter registration and voter turnout rates, such as students of color and Business Economics majors.

Enrollment, Fall 2023.

Demographic	Undergrad, %	Graduate, %	Total, %
Female	53	73	56
Male	47	27	44
.	.	.	.
White	76	88	77
Hispanic	12	7	12
Black/African American	4	3	4
Two or more races	2	2	2
Asian	1	1	1
Non-Resident Alien	1	<1	1

Major	# of Students
Physical Education	917
Early Childhood/Childhood Education	660
Exercise Science	545
Business Economics	462
Sport Management	404
Psychology	362
Inclusive Childhood Education	301
Criminology	222
Social Studies Education	199
Speech and Hearing Science	173

8. ***What internal and external factors lead to success? For example, do you have the president's support (internal) or is your campus located in a full vote-by-mail state (external)?***

On-campus resources include

- Students, such as those in BridgeCortland and in our NYPIRG chapter
- Administrators, including our Provost, Dr. Ann McClellan, and Assistant Vice Provost for Student Success, Dr. Mary Schlarb.
- Staff, including Kevin Pristash (Director, Corey Union); Lorraine Lopez-Janove, Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer, and Katrina Hodge, Assistant Director, Multicultural Life and Diversity Office.
- Faculty. Examples include –
  - Professor Timothy Delaune (Political Science), an expert in Constitutional Law. Professor Delaune has twice presented on the US Constitution as part of our Constitution Day events and he and the Institute for Civic Engagement's director are developing a *Disagree with the Professor* project that is designed to help student's critical thinking and constructive disagreement skills.
  - Professor Christopher Badurek (Chair, Geography) and Dr. Laura Dunbar (English), who have served as a Deliberative Dialogue moderators.
  - Professor Eric Edlund (Chair, Physics) and Dr. Laura Dunbar (English), both of whom continue to invite students to restart our College Republicans club.
  - Professor Jill Murphy (Chair, Health), with whom ICE Director Suarez is co-launching the SUNY Cortland Heterodox Academy Campus Community as a way of fostering open inquiry and constructive disagreement among faculty/staff and, by extension, among students.

    Among the other individual members of the SUNY Cortland Heterodox Academy *Campus Community* Professor Eric Edlund, and Professor Ryan Vorhees (Chair, Sport Management). Our President, Dr. Eric Bitterbaum, supports our Heterodox Academy Campus Community.

We draw on external resources in addition to Heterodox Academy. For example, the Institute has promoted Unify America events for students. It is partnering with our NYPIRG chapter to register students for Unify America's February 2024 constructive disagreement events.

We also rely on information resources that include Campus Compact (of which President Bitterbaum is a member), CIRCLE, the National Constitution Center, the Campus Election Engagement Project, and the National Issues Forum Institute.

Another campus resource is our Cortland Applied Learning Practitioners (CALP) professional development/community of practice program. An alumna's fall 2023 gift supports CALP's new focus, beginning in spring 2024: Democracy engagement. As of this writing, three faculty members have already applied for the three available Fellowships.

9. **What additional resources are needed to help the institution be successful?**
We need financial support for a part-time employee at the Institute for Civic Engagement; this person would help design and conduct democracy engagement programming.

V. *Goals*
Long-term goals

1. **What is the long-term vision the team hopes to achieve for the institution?**
We are planning for voter registration and voter turnout rates consistently at 90%, minimum. We are also planning to nurture a nascent community-wide culture of democracy engagement, with a network of three "groupings" –
- SUNY Cortland offices, departments, and student clubs.
- Community partners, including the Town/Gown Steering Committee.
- Professional collaborations, including SUNY Central and individual campuses, our SUNY+ Team, AASCU's American Democracy Project, and the Civic Learning and Democracy Engagement Coalition.

2. **What knowledge, skills, and capacities (learning outcomes) does the institution want students to achieve and graduate with in order to be active and informed?**
We want students to
- Know how to apply their academic lessons to civil civic decision-making.
- Know how to apply active listening skills as they engage in constructive disagreement.
- Be in the habit of learning about issues from a variety of responsible sources and using that knowledge to participate in civic learning civic decision-making, including voting.
- Have a sense of accomplished agency that keeps them engaged in post-graduation civic decision-making.

3. **What are the outcomes the team wants to see at the institution over the next 10 years?**
Long-term Institutional Outcomes – Programming, Policy, and Procedure
Our working group wants the institution to embody democracy engagement principles in its Student Affairs and Academic Affairs programming. Policy, programming, and procedures generate greater student democracy engagement in terms of working with the community (including government agencies to help solve problems and to vote at rates close to 100%. This would continue after graduation. This includes
- The Institute for Civic Engagement will have a dedicated budget line for
  o A staff member (at least 20 hours/week) to help coordinate projects, programs, and events.
  o At least three $1,000 (minimum) stipends for CALP Democracy Engagement Fellowships each semester. Ideally, that budget line would also include at least $500 for any non-government community organization that collaborates on the design and running of a new academic course that includes a strong democracy engagement component.
  o S.M.A.R.T.I.E.? – Yes, with at least five years needed to develop the sustainable funding.
- Democracy engagement would be a factor in
  o Our new Strategic Plan.
  o Recruitment/hiring decisions.
  o Retention/Tenure/Promotion decisions.
  o Alumni Engagement's follow-up regarding alumni's democracy engagement post-graduation.
  o Institutional Advancement's development of new student scholarships.
  o S.M.A.R.T.I.E.? – Yes:

- The new Strategic Plan should be enacted in under a year.
- The other outcomes in this outcome will need at least five years to develop
- Continuing support from upper administration.
  - As noted earlier, President Bitterbaum has repeatedly demonstrated his support for this work.
  - With new initiatives we want continuing support.
  - S.M.A.R.T.I.E.? – Yes.
- Two new attributes from the Registrar –
  - "CL" for courses that include at least 25% civic learning content.
  - "DE," within the existing "AL" (applied learning) attribute for courses whose student learning outcomes include collaborating with government in the application of course content to real-world problem-solving projects.
  - S.M.A.R.T.I.E.? – Yes.

Long-term Departmental/Office/Faculty-Staff Outcomes
- The Institute for Civic Engagement, our Multicultural Life and Diversity Office, our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Office, and student groups that are dedicated to traditionally marginalized student populations will have an established relationship through which they collaborate on at least one democracy engagement event each semester. S.M.A.R.T.I.E.? – Yes. This should be accomplished by five years from now.
- The Institute will conduct at least three class-based democracy engagement activities each semester. S.M.A.R.T.I.E.? – Yes, as currently, the Institute conducts two/semester. That number could be higher if the Institute gets funding for a part-time employee.
- Each year, ICE will partner with campus and community organizations to conduct upbeat get-out-the-vote events, including live music. S.M.A.R.T.I.E.? – Yes,
- At least ten faculty/staff members will participate regularly in Heterodox Academy discussions (blogs and online events) as a way of helping them infuse the value and practice of open inquiry into their syllabi and other interactions with students – and colleagues. S.M.A.R.T.I.E.? – Yes.
  - Although the SUNY Cortland HxA *Campus Community* began in November 2023, faculty and staff members who represent a wide variety of political perspectives are already members, and President Bitterbaum expressed his support for this group.
  - Our first meeting will be on February 1, 2024.

Long-term Greater Cortland community Outcomes
We will hold at least one event each year in collaboration with the League of Women Voters of Cortland County and a local elected official.
- Those events would highlight the importance of participation in local civic decision-making, including voting, participation in public meetings, joining a nonprofit organization's Board of Directors, participating in a political election campaign, and serving as a poll worker.
- S.M.A.R.T.I.E.? – Yes, because for years we have enjoyed a good working relationship with LWV, with the organization often reaching out to us for ideas on collaboration.

Long-term Student-focused Outcomes
- Voter registration and voter turnout rates for all SUNY Cortland students, regardless of demographic make-up, would for state and national elections,
  - Consistently at 90%, minimum
  - Rates for local elections at 60%.
  - S.M.A.R.T.I.E.? – Yes, especially for state and national elections.
- At least one SUNY Cortland student serves as a poll worker every two years.
  - We have discussed this with the Cortland County Board of Elections; the challenge is to recruit a student who is registered to vote in Cortland County, who is registered as either a Republican or

Democrat, and who lives locally so that they could participate in poll worker ("Election Supervisor") training.

- o S.M.A.R.T.I.E.? – Yes. especially ambitious because of the requirements.
- At least four students will participate in *Unify America* events each year. S.M.A.R.T.I.E.? – Yes. Repeated efforts over the past year have not led to student participation, but with closer ties to student clubs and with a more overt focus on democracy engagement (and constructive disagreement in particular), we should be able to reach this objective.
- Each year, at least four students earn the SUNY Cortland Civic Learning microcredential.
  - o Dr. Jared Mc Brady (Coordinator, Secondary Education, History) and the Institute for Civic Engagement's Director, John Suarez, developed this microcredential in spring 2023, modelling it after the NY State Seal of Civic Learning.
  - o As soon as the college's process for reviewing microcredential proposals is approved, McBrady and Suarez will submit it for review.
  - o S.M.A.R.T.I.E.? – Yes. This would be easiest for Secondary Education, History, majors because of the microcredential's design and because of this major is one of the ten most popular at SUNY Cortland.
- Our First-Year Orientation course (COR 101) includes a *civic learning* unit that connects students' majors to the importance of voting. (Each section of COR 101 is focused on a particular major.) S.M.A.R.T.I.E.? – Yes. The idea was raised by Lori Schlicht, Associate Director of Academic Engagement (in the office of Advisement and Transition), so there is already support for this idea.
- At least five Action Team interns develop and conduct voter education events each academic year.
  - o Those events would include deliberative dialogues, debates, and panel discussions with Q&A sessions.
  - o S.M.A.R.T.I.E.? – Yes.
    - – Some offices (such as the Educational Opportunity Program) and departments (such as Sociology and Health) often encourage some of their majors to apply for an Action Team internship.
    - – In addition, from 2016 through 2022, we have had a Campus Compact Civic Engagement Fellow; that Fellow is required to serve as an Action Team intern.
- Each year, at least one faculty member and/or one (mentored) student submits scholarship to the Democracy Engagement section of the SUNY *Journal of the Scholarship of Engagement* (JoSE), helping to develop this area of teaching and learning. S.M.A.R.T.I.E.? – Yes. JoSE launched in 2020; it already has one article co-authored by a student (though not in the Democracy Engagement section). Interest in the journal is growing, and we expect more mentored students to submit scholarship.

4. ***Are the goals S.M.A.R.T.I.E. (specific, measurable, ambitious, realistic, time-bound, inclusive, and equitable)?***
Yes. Please refer to the items in number 3, above.

5. ***Do the goals contribute to expanding access to voting for a diverse set of students?***
Yes, especially through
- The college's long-standing and overt commitment to equity, as demonstrated in part by its mission statement and its funding for our Multicultural Life and Diversity Office and our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Office.
- Our continuing outreach (regarding democracy engagement) to students across a range of backgrounds and majors.

6. ***Are these goals informed by principles of diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice?***
Yes, as demonstrated by our guiding documents.

7. ***Are these goals informed by data and research?***
Yes – We draw on data from our Institutional Research and Assessment Office, NSLVE, NSEE, and FSEE.

Short-term goals

1. ***What outcomes does the institution need to reach during the next three years to stay on track to reach its longer-term vision?***
The outcomes that we need to reach over the next three years are –

Short-term Institutional Outcomes – Programmatic, Policy, Procedure
- Working with Rich Coyne (Director, Institutional Advancement) and with Dr. Dominic Fantacone (Director of Research and Sponsored Programs), the Institute for Civic Engagement needs to build support from alumni and through external grants so that the Institute can
  - Hire a part-time employee to help design and conduct democracy engagement activities and events.
  - Fund its Cortland Applied Learning Practitioners *Democracy Engagement Fellowships.*
- Convince upper Administration to incorporate democracy engagement into our new Strategic Plan so that we can then work with –
  - Faculty Senate on doing so for –
    - Recruitment/hiring decisions.
    - Retention/Tenure/Promotion decisions.
  - The Registrar for *civic learning* and *democracy engagement* attributes

Short-term Departmental/Office/Faculty-Staff Outcomes
- The Institute for Civic Engagement must secure long-term and consistent working relationships with campus organizations, especially those that represent students from marginalized communities.
- The co-chairs of the SUNY Cortland HxA Campus Community must keep this Campus Community productive so that faculty can continue modelling constructive disagreement skills for their students.

Long-term Greater Cortland community Outcomes
Continue collaborating with the League of Women Voters of Cortland County and with local elected officials.

Long-term Student-focused Outcomes
- Recruit voter registration participation from SGA and SGA clubs.
- Plan further in advance to develop student interest in *Unify America* events. Repeated efforts over the past year have not led to student participation, but with closer ties to student clubs and with a more overt focus on democracy engagement (and constructive disagreement in particular), we should be able to reach this objective.
- Earn approval for, and begin promoting, the SUNY Cortland Civic Learning microcredential.
- Develop and incorporate a civic learning unit for our First-Year Orientation course (COR 101).
- Recruit Action Team interns from a larger number of departments.
- Recruit greater faculty involvement in the SUNY *Journal of the Scholarship of Engagement.* We began this process in November 2023, when Dr. Jeffrey Jackson (English, and a SUNY Cortland

Diversity Fellow) agreed to serve as JoSE's first Executive Director, with founders Dr. Laura Dunbar (English) and John Suarez continuing to serve as co-editors.

   a. *How do the goals of the campus voting coalition contribute to the institution's overall equity and inclusion goals?*
   Equity and inclusion goals are part of student activities such as deliberative dialogues and panel discussions, and they are part of our Cortland Applied Learning Practitioners *Democracy Engagement Fellows* program; all of these are linked to civic decision-making at and between elections.

   b. *How do the goals support the institution's strategic plan?*
   These goals harmonize with our current strategic plan. Many faculty and staff are promoting the specific goals of open inquiry, constructive disagreement, and democracy engagement into our new, under development, strategic plan.

2. *What resources does the institution need to ensure its longer-term vision is within reach?*
   We could use funding for a part-time Institute for Civic Engagement employee who would help develop and conduct democracy engagement programing, including collaborating with other campus organizations to promote voter registration and voter turnout.

3. *Who does the institution need to involve in order to reach its longer-term vision?*
   We could recruit academic department chairs to promote voter registration, civic learning, and democracy engagement in course content.

4. *Does your campus voting coalition have the capacity and/or support to achieve this goal?*
   Yes, though it would be a slow process because of everyone's heavy workload of competing demands.

5. *Does the goal meet the SMARTIE framework (specific, measurable, ambitious, realistic, time-bound, inclusive, and equitable)?*
   The goal is definitely ambitious, but marginally realistic.

6. *Does the goal solve an immediate issue student voters face?*
   The immediate issue would be faculty members' lack of attention to voting and other forms of democracy engagement. We realize that this is a critical element in nurturing a culture of democracy engagement.

7. *Is the goal informed by data and research?*
   Yes, especially data from our NSLVE, NSEE, and FSEE reports, from anecdotal evidence, and from CIRCLE research.

8. *What does your institution need to do to best mobilize voters for the next election (whether local state, federal primaries or general election?*
   Because the next election will be a contentious one like the 2022 election (for which we had a spike in voter registration and turnout), voter mobilization will probably not be as difficult as it has often been. Our concern, then, is more on voter education as it relates to
   - Constructive disagreement, primarily. This concern relates to students' *and faculty/staff* skills with this consideration.
   - Students' sources of information, which are often social media-based.

VI. Strategy

Short-term guiding questions

1. ***What is the work?***
   a. ***What are the planned activities and initiatives related to voter registration, voter education, voter turnout and mobilization, and voter access?***

We are planning to collaborate with organizations on- and off-campus to conduct –

- Voter registration drives –
  o In classrooms.
  o At tabling events.
  o At voter education events, including panel discussions, debates, and deliberative dialogues.
  o Through requests to faculty members to remind students about voter registration deadlines; provide faculty members with resources to share with students.
  o By posting reminders on posters throughout campus and on the college's closed-circuit TV system.
- Voter education events such as –
  o Panel discussions.
  o Debates.
  o Deliberative dialogues.
- Voter turnout and mobilization through –
  o Messaging over email, social media, the college's closed-circuit TV system, and "old school" techniques such as posters and sidewalk chalking.
  o Conducting "Guided Tours" to the on-campus polling station. (Off-campus students vote elsewhere. One year, we provided transportation for off-campus students, but only one student took advantage of the service.)
  o Conducting an outdoor live festive music event with a *Dragons for Democracy* theme.

   b. ***What would it take to Ask Every Student on campus about participating in our democracy? For resources and tools to do so, visit:*** www.studentvoting.org***.***

We have begun the process of

- Integrating democracy engagement into academic coursework, primarily through
  o Our Cortland Applied Learning Practitioners *Democracy Engagement* Fellowships.
  o Advocating for democracy engagement to be a key part of our soon-to-be revised Strategic Plan.
- Integrating democracy engagement into Student Life, especially through
  o Our partnerships with Student Life leadership.
  o Student Government Association and SGA clubs.
  o Action Team internships.
  o Mentorship of students who want to
    – Conduct democracy engagement-related activities, such as students in Secondary Education, History, classes.
    – Start a new SGA club, such as the College Republicans (fall 2022), Turning Point USA (fall 2023).
- Developing Student Leadership opportunities through
  o Action Team internships.
  o Students who want to start new clubs.
- Developing Institutional Partnerships through our collaboration with offices such as
  o Multicultural Life and Diversity Office.
  o Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Office.
  o Student Activities.
  o Residential Life.

24

- Using Human-Centered Design in our partnerships with
  - Individual students (as with our Action Team internships).
  - SGA Clubs.
  - ***c. Where will each activity occur (e.g., in a public campus space, in the classroom, virtually)?***

Promotional activities will take place in classrooms, in hallways (at the Education Building's first-floor, for example), at open spaces (on the steps of Corey Union, for example), and in rooms where we are conducting events, such as Park Center's Hall of Fame Room.

2. *Who is responsible for implementing each planned strategy and tactic?*

The director of the Institute for Civic Engagement is primarily responsible for coordinating these strategies, with other individuals (such as our NYPIRG Project Coordinator) responsible for conducting them.

3. *Who is the audience for each strategy and tactic?*

The audience for most of these strategies is made up of students, with certain events focused on specific demographics. Other strategies, such as those growing out of Heterodox Academy programming, are intended for faculty and staff.

    a. What methods will be used to make strategies and tactics accessible to diverse populations?

The physical locations will be accessible locations, and programming will be co-designed with student representatives of a diversity of populations.

    b. Are you including tactics that focus on reaching all students, especially traditionally under-represented students?

Yes.

4. *Where will each activity occur on and off campus?*

Activities on campus will take place in a variety of locations, as described in section V.1.c., above. Off-campus activities would take place mainly at 40 Main Street, Cortland, at the office of the Cortland County Business Development Corporation (which is where our Town/Gown Steering Committee meetings are held).

5. *When will the work happen and what preparations are required beforehand to make it happen? Are individuals consistently (i.e., quarterly, semesterly, or yearly) trained to ensure conversations in zero errors?*

Voter registration work will take place mainly during September and October. Voter education work takes place throughout the academic year. NYPIRG and the Institute for Civic Engagement conduct nonpartisan communication training.

6. *Why is each strategy and tactic being implemented and what is the goal for each activity?*

Each strategy is intended to convince students to register to vote, to vote, to learn about a particular issue, or to learn how to help address a particular issue. Much of the messaging is tailored to specific audiences, based on certain demographics.

Long-term guiding questions
1. *How would you describe a campus committed to educating for civic learning, political engagement, and voter participation?*

That campus' culture would revolve around political engagement and voter participation, from the institution's mission and strategic plan to course design (including applied learning) to SGA clubs' activities and residence hall messaging.

What would it look like and how would you know this commitment existed?
One way in which this commitment would be noticed is through overt and subtle messaging, from administrative and student groups' announcements to students' informal conversations.

2. ***How might your institution depend on capacity and competence related to diversity, equity, and inclusion in tandem with civic learning, political engagement, and voter participation?***
We have already begun partnering with DEI-related organizations and relevant faculty/staff members to co-design and conduct programming.

3. ***What will it take to build toward this vision of sustained commitment beyond a single election cycle (e.g., resources, curricular offerings, staffing)?***
It will take additional funding for the Institute for Civic Engagement (to support a part-time staff member or Grad Assistant), incorporation of democracy engagement into guiding documents such as our (currently under development) strategic plan, and incorporation of democracy engagement into policies around, for example, retention, tenure, and promotion.

4. ***Where does work need to happen in order to institutionalize this vision (e.g., faculty senate, student government, division of student affairs)?***
This work needs to happen across the campus with administrative-led efforts (as with our new strategic plan) and with "grass-roots" initiatives (as with students who want to start new politically-oriented clubs and faculty/staff who join, and participate in, Heterodox Academy).

   a. ***Who is responsible within your working group for catalyzing or leading each effort? One step further, how would you know that this commitment has been institutionalized?***
The Institute for Civic Engagement's Director and the Assistant Provost for Student Success are especially responsible for leading this effort. We will know that this commitment has been institutionalized when messaging (subtle and overt) reflect our commitment, when syllabi integrate civic learning and democracy engagement, and when "grass-roots" actions from students, faculty, and staff become commonplace, such as participation in local government meetings.

   b. ***Does your coalition have a succession plan that continually involves and builds up new student leaders, as well as provides for staffing transitions?***
We need to develop that plan.

5. ***On what timeline will efforts to enact this vision occur? (Think in terms of years; e.g., in year one your institution will accomplish what? In year two your institution will accomplish what? And so on…)***
Year One (2023-2024) –
- New Strategic Plan includes a democracy engagement objective.
- We reach 90% voter registration and voter turnout, especially because of the contentious election and because of our voter registration and voter turnout efforts.
Year Three (2025-2026) –
- Democracy engagement considerations are included in hiring and in RTP decisions.
- Alumni Engagement includes at least one question regarding post-graduation democracy engagement in its alumni surveys.
- Institutional Advancement continues to encourage alumni to support democracy engagement-focused scholarships.
- The Registrar provides "CL" (civic learning) and "DE" (democracy engagement) attributes for appropriate academic courses.
- All sections of our First-Year Orientation course include a *democracy engagement* unit.

Year Five (2027-2028) –
- The Institute for Civic Engagement has funding for
  - A 20-hour/week part-time employee or graduate assistant
  - At least three $1,000 (minimum) stipends for CALP Democracy Engagement Fellowships each semester.
- The Institute for Civic Engagement, our Multicultural Life and Diversity Office, our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Office, and student groups that are dedicated to traditionally marginalized student populations will have an established relationship through which they collaborate on at least one democracy engagement event each semester.
- The Institute for Civic Engagement conducts at least three class-based democracy engagement activities each semester.
- Each year, at least four students earn the SUNY Cortland Civic Learning microcredential.
- Each year, at least one faculty member and/or one (mentored) student submits scholarship to the Democracy Engagement section of the SUNY *Journal of the Scholarship of Engagement* (JoSE), helping to develop this area of teaching and learning.

Year Eight (2030-2031) –
- At least one SUNY Cortland student serves as a poll worker every two years.
- The Institute for Civic Engagement partners yearly with campus and community organizations to conduct upbeat get-out-the-vote events, including election-related live music.
- At least ten faculty/staff members who participate regularly in Heterodox Academy discussions (blogs and online events) as a way of helping them infuse the value and practice of open inquiry into their syllabi and other interactions with students – and colleagues.

6. ***How are you ensuring that your short-term tactics are embedded into the campus culture and can outlast the individuals leading that effort (accounting for turnover)?***

With collaboration between the Institute for Civic Engagement's collaboration and the Assistant Provost for Student Success, with our advocacy for including democracy engagement into our new strategic plan, and with growing support from upper administration and from faculty, staff, and students (especially regarding the need for constructive disagreement programming), we are helping to ensure that our work is part of campus culture.

VI. ***NSLVE as a Resource for Colleges and Universities.*** Not received, as of December 7, 2023.

VII. *Reporting*

1. ***How will the plan be shared, internally and externally? Please state where the plan will be shared, keeping in mind to share the report with multiple stakeholders.***

The plan will be shared through a variety of media, especially on campus. The Institute for Civic Engagement, for example, will post it at its webpage and provide access to it through its social media accounts and through its monthly newsletter. Announcements regarding events will be sent via our closed-circuit television system and through email and social media to people on- and off-campus. For on-campus announcements, we will also use low-tech approaches such as the students' campus newspaper and the college's biweekly *Bulletin*. The paper medium will also have QR codes as a way of giving people additional information.

2. ***Will the data used to inform the plan, such as your institution's NSLVE report, be made public? If so, how?***

NSLVE data will be available at the Institute for Civic Engagement's webpage. NSEE and FSEE data are available at the webpage of Institutional Research and Assessment.

3. How will this plan be shared with your campus voting coalition and/or team to ensure it is used to execute student voting work on campus?

The plan will be shared as a PDF with our working group. In addition, the Director of the Institute for Civic Engagement will work with working group members on their particular roles.

VIII.   Evaluation

1. What is the purpose of evaluation?

Evaluation will be used to help us refine our methodology so that the methodology stays effective, especially as each year incoming students represent a "moving target" with regard to knowledge, interest, motivation, and communication channels. Also, vote-related laws and regulations can change, so we need to ensure that we comply and adapt to stay effective.

2. What does the institution want to know and be able to do with the information gathered?

We want to know ways in which we are succeeding and ways in which we need to improve.

3. Who is the audience for the evaluation?

Our audience is our Working Group, administration, the Institute for Civic Engagement, and politically-oriented student groups.

4. Who will carry out the evaluation? Is there an Institutional Research Office representative involved? Faculty who are already studying related research questions? Student Affairs educators carrying out programmatic and long-term learning assessments?

We will recruit an independent team to evaluate our work. Dr. Stuart Daman, Director of our Institutional Research and Assessment Office, has already been helping the Institute's director with data collection and assessment.

5. When will the evaluation be carried out and completed?

In addition to our NSLVE survey, we will record the number of volunteers and student participants at various events, and we will survey participants with regard to the educational and motivational value of those events, relative to them actually voting.

6. What impact is already being measured for other related initiatives, like Carnegie Foundation's Classification for Community Engagement?

Due to workload considerations and to development of a new strategic plan, we decided to not apply for Carnegie this year. At the moment, impact is being measured through NSLVE, NSEE, and NFEE.

7. What information (data, evidence) must be collected and how will it be collected?
What are the performance measures and indicators of success?

In addition to our NSLVE survey, we will record the number of volunteers and student participants at various events, and we will survey participants with regard to the educational and motivational value of those events, relative to them actually voting.

8. How will information (data, evidence) be analyzed?

We will have quantitative and qualitative data to analyze, looking for ways of refining our messaging. Statistical data will be analyzed through Likert-type measures; qualitative data will be analyzed through a coded approach that identifies "markers" indicating an events perceived value in dimensions of

understanding, interest, personal relevance, and motivation. Together, these data and analyses can help us refine our efforts to integrate civic participation into our campus culture.

> ### a. How will the results of the evaluation be shared?
We will share our evaluation results in events that are open and free to the public, such as Community Roundtables and Sandwich Seminars, and through electronic formats such as the Institute's monthly newsletter, its webpage, and its social media accounts.

> ### b. How will the success of diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts within the plan be evaluated, beyond NSLVE race/ethnicity breakdown information?
We will track the voter registration and voter turnout rates of students from marginalized communities; we will also record, as much as possible, the participation of students from marginalized communities in democracy engagement events.

9. Will efforts to evaluate be limited to one person/one area of your campus or be part of a larger campus effort?
Assuming that democracy engagement is incorporated into our new strategic plan, evaluation efforts will be a larger campus effort.

10. What are your institution's metrics for success? Share what worked, what didn't, why, and how things will be altered for future action plans.
Our metrics are in the NSLVE, NSEE, and FSEE data, along with our observations during and after events. We need more flexible quantitative and qualitative instruments to help us learn ways in which we can be effective, especially as students' interests, perspectives, and information sources change.

11. What progress has been made toward each short- and long-term goal?
Progress toward short-term goals – We secured financial support from our DEI Office for a full-day conference on May 30 *[Title],* by Dr. John Reiff.
Progress toward long-term goals – The Institute already conducts an average of two democracy engagement events/semester.

12. Were efforts utilized to advance or implement the Ask Every Student framework?
> #### a. Integrating voter registration or GOTV (mail-in ballots, early voting, voter ID asks) into existing processes
Voter registration forms are included in first-year students' orientation package, but that package is so large that those forms can easily be ignored.
> #### b. Executing individualized voter registration and democratic engagement tactics
No.
> #### c. Institutionalizing tactics to be a sustainable part of campus culture?
Not yet.

13. Were efforts advanced regarding DEI and justice priorities on campus?
Yes. DEI and justice are a major priority on our campus, including the President's Office, the Provost's Office, Admissions, Academic Affairs, and Student Affairs.

14. Which efforts were most successful to contributing to shifts in NSLVE and other data?
What could be done to improve upon data metrics? For instance, if there was a big voter registration push, but voter registration data in NSLVE didn't change much, how can we improve that?
In-class and tabling efforts were most successful.

15. What are your key performance indicators, and did you satisfy expectations?
Key performance indicators include –
- Voter registration and voter turnout rates.
- The number of students participating in voter education events
- The number of courses that include civic learning and democracy engagement components

16. Was campus administration supportive of civic learning and democratic engagement efforts?
  What can be done to get university officials to sign the ALL IN Presidents Commitment to Full Student Voter Participation?
Campus administration has been, and continues to be supportive of democracy engagement efforts.

17. How can students' research projects support evaluation measures?
Students' research projects can help us understand students' motivations and perspectives.

18. What resources do you need next year to advance civic engagement and reach long-term goals?
We need funding for the Institute for Civic Engagement's
- Cortland Applied Learning Practitioners *Democracy Engagement Fellowships*
- Part-time employee

19. What are next steps for how evaluation information will be shared?
Evaluation information will be shared with
- The Assistant Provost for Student Success
- The All In working group
- The Institute for Civic Engagement's Advisory Council.