



MARSHALL UNIVERSITY

VOTER FRIENDLY CAMPUS PLAN
2026-2027



Voter Friendly Campus Planning Team

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Eiryn Poindexter, Library Associate, University Libraries

Stephen Tipler, Web & Digital Services Librarian, University Libraries

Wendy Thomas, Co-President, League of Women Voters of the Huntington Area

Scott Caserta, Clerk, Cabell County, West Virginia

Grace Taylor, Chief Deputy Clerk, Cabell County, West Virginia

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Marshall University Quick Facts

- A student-centered [R2 Doctoral University with high research activity](#) located in downtown Huntington, West Virginia, with additional locations in South Charleston and Point Pleasant, West Virginia.
- **Founded 1837** as Marshall Academy
- **Named For John Marshall**, 4th Chief Justice of the United States
- **Accreditation:** [Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association](#)
- **Research Funding:** \$65+ million annually
- **Alumni:** 112,000+, including 53,000 in West Virginia

PROGRAMS OFFERED

- 3 Associate Degree Programs
- 59 Baccalaureate Degrees Offered
- 80 Baccalaureate Majors and Areas of Emphasis
- 51 Master's Degree Programs
- 2 Education Specialist Degree Programs
- 28 Graduate Certificate Programs
- 4 Research Doctoral Degree Programs
- 6 Professional Doctoral Degree Programs

ATHLETICS

- NCAA Division I, Sun Belt Conference
- 17 Teams
 - NCAA Men's Sports: Baseball, Basketball, Cross Country, Football, Golf, Soccer, Track & Field
 - NCAA Women's Sports: Basketball, Cheerleading, Cross Country, Golf, Soccer, Softball, Swimming and Diving, Tennis, Track & Field, Volleyball
- Spirit Groups: Dance Team, Marching Thunder, Pep Band
- Student-Athletes: 468, 86% (402) of whom are eligible to vote in the United States.
- 11 Intramural Sports offered through The Rec including: Soccer, Basketball, Flag Football, Dodgeball and Wiffleball
- 12+ Club Sports: Hockey, Men's and Women's Rugby, Tennis, Sports Fencing Club, Men's and Women's Lacrosse, Cycling, Wrestling, and Equestrian





Campus Life

- **Over 300** recognized student organizations
- **Student Services:** Accessibility & Accommodations, Access, Connections and Engagement, Office of Student Success, Student Support Services, Campus Activities Board, Fraternity & Sorority Life, LEAD Center, Student Advocacy, West Virginia Autism Training Center, Office of Career Education, Counseling Center, Student Health Services, H.E.L.P. Program, Security/Escort Service, Tutoring, Writing Center, Veteran & Military Support
- **Study Abroad Programs:** 300+ sites in 42 countries
- **Housing and Residence Life:** 2 freshman halls, 7 upper class halls, and 1 residential apartment community for graduate students
- **National Student Exchange Program:** 200 colleges within the U.S. and Canada

Student Body (Fall 2024 Data)

- **Total:** 12,318
- **60% Female; 40% Male**
- **Undergraduate:** 9,165 (74.4%)
- **Graduate:** 2,614 (21.2%)
- **First Professional (MD, PharmD, DPT):** 539 (4.4%)
- **Minority Students:** 1,598 (14.4%) (excludes unreported)
- **International Students:** 200 (1.6%)
- **Out-of-State:** 2,753 (22.4%)
- **Students from:** 49 states, including Washington, D.C., and 51 countries
- **Average Incoming Freshman ACT:** 21.4
- **Average Incoming Freshman GPA:** 3.62
- **First to Second Year retention rate of first-time freshmen 2023-24:** 72.2%
- **Degrees Granted 2023-24:** 2,514

Faculty/Class Size

- **Faculty with Ph.D. or terminal degree in their fields:** 84%
- **Undergraduate Student to Faculty Ratio:** 16 to 1
- **Average Undergraduate Class Size:** 20
- **Average Graduate Class Size:** 10

Affordability

- **77% of undergraduate students** receive some form of financial aid.
- **\$23 million** in institutional scholarships & grants awarded annually.
- **\$94 million** in total financial aid awarded annually.
- **The [Marshall For All](#) initiative** to make higher education accessible and affordable gives undergraduate students an opportunity to graduate debt-free.

10.23.2025

DATE OF DATA
REPORT FROM
THE OFFICE OF
INSTITUTIONAL
RESEARCH AND
PLANNING



FALL 2024 TOTAL ENROLLMENT:

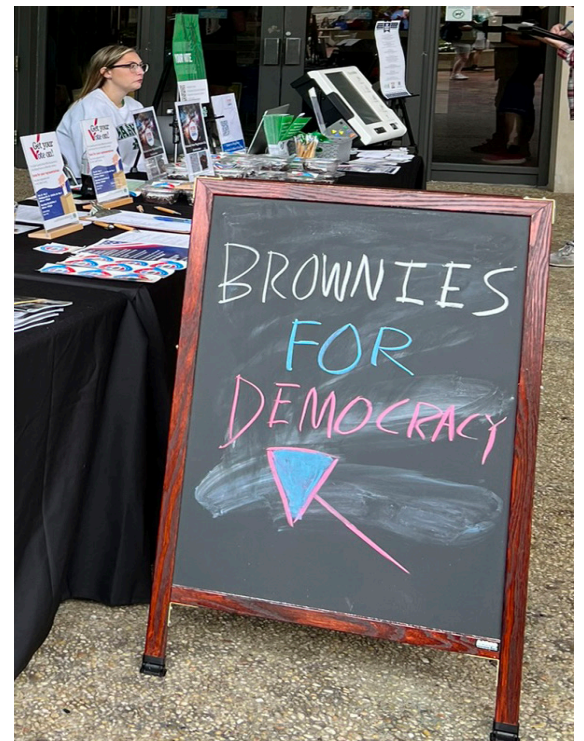
12,318

Count of Students from Appalachia: 11,237
Percentage of Fall 2024 Students from Appalachia: 91.2%

Count of Students from West Virginia: 9,876
Percentage of Fall 2024 Students from West Virginia: 80%



President Brad Smith talking with Marshall University students.





Marshall Student Voting Data

- In the **2016 General Election**, the student voting rate at Marshall was **51%** (the national student voting rate was 48%).
- In the **2018 General Election**, the student voting rate at Marshall was **37%** (the national student voting rate was 39%).
- In the **2020 General Election**, the student voting rate at Marshall was **64%** (the national student voting rate was 66%).
- In the **2022 General Election**, the student voting rate at Marshall was **25%** (the national student voting rate was 31%).

(Data from October 2021 & June 2024 NSLVE Campus Report, Institute for Democracy & Higher Education, Jonathan M. Tisch College of Civic Life)



80%

MU STUDENTS ARE FROM WEST VIRGINIA

MARSHALL UNIVERSITY PRIMARILY SERVES THE SOUTHERN WEST VIRGINIA REGION AS WELL AS SURROUNDING COUNTIES, MANY OF WHICH ARE WITHIN APPALACHIA. MANY MU STUDENTS ARE ALSO FIRST GENERATION COLLEGE STUDENTS.

91.2%

MU STUDENTS ARE FROM AN APPALACHIAN COUNTY



Early Voting on Marshall's Campus

- Marshall University was **the first on-campus early voting precinct in the state of West Virginia** (West Virginia Secretary of State's Office, 2018).
- Marshall University's precinct **employs four early voting clerks for 10 days each election year** (Cabell County Clerk's Office, 2025).
- During the **2024 General Election, approximately 4,000 voters used Marshall's early voting precinct** (Cabell County Clerk's Office, 2025).
- A quarter (**24.7%**) of **Marshall students (3,038)** are from Cabell County and can vote early at the Drinko Library if they are registered to vote.

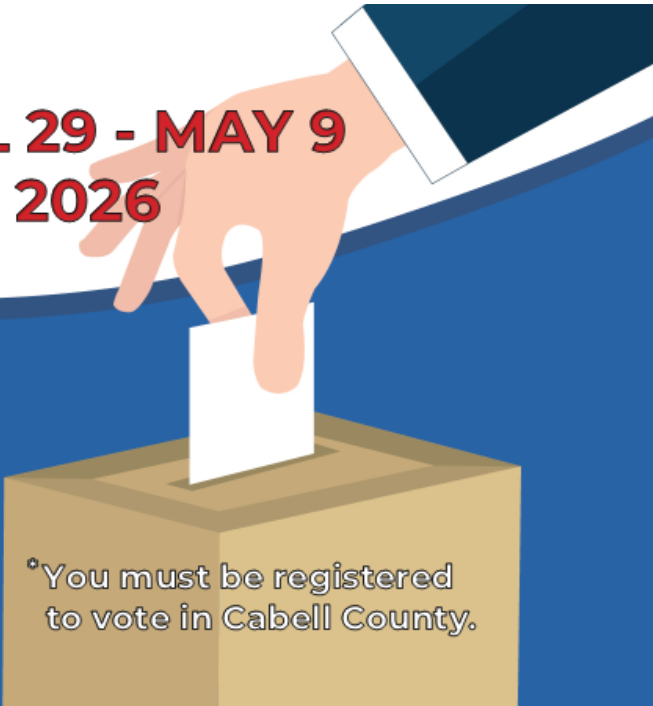


- Register to vote
- Check your registration status
- Request an absentee ballot
- All 50 states



Get your Vote on!

APRIL 29 - MAY 9 2026



*You must be registered to vote in Cabell County.

Vote early*
in
Drinko Library 138

Monday - Friday
8:00 am - 4:30 pm

Saturdays
9:00 am - 5:00 pm

marshall.edu/HerdVotes





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This action plan was developed out of a shared concern for democracy and a commitment to the responsibility that Marshall University bears in developing the civic consciousness of our students. The plan was developed by Marshall University's Voter Friendly Campus Planning Team, which includes faculty, staff, students, administrators, and community leaders.

The purpose of the plan is to focus our efforts related to the institution's commitment to civic learning and democratic engagement, as reflected in our [Mission](#), [Vision](#), and [Creed](#) statements. Ultimately, we want to ensure the strong presence of democracy, civic literacy, civil discourse, and civic engagement on campus and in our core curriculum, programming priorities, and in administrative, faculty, staff, and student culture. Our long-term goals through 2032 are to:

- **strengthen civic learning** at Marshall by increasing the number of students who take courses with the "American Institutions" attribute and by increasing the number of students who complete the Constitutional Democracy minor.
- **strengthen democratic engagement** at Marshall by celebrating all civic holidays annually.
- **increase voter registration integration into student life** by meeting students where they are and making voter registration information available in multiple different places on and off our main campus and through a variety of communication channels.
- **increase Marshall student voting rates** to meet or exceed national student voting rates.
- **elevate the voting rates of students of color** to the same rate as white students.

The short-term goals of the plan involve strategies for making measurable progress toward each long-term goal.

- **Strengthen civic learning** by increasing the number of courses offered with the "American Institutions" attribute **by 2027** and by promoting "American Institutions" courses and the Constitutional Democracy minor **every semester**.
- **Strengthen democratic engagement** by celebrating **National Voter Registration Day** annually with a tabling event on the Student Center Plaza; celebrating **Constitution Day** annually with an interactive trivia game event for students; celebrating **National Voter Education Week** with daily tabling events; promoting **Vote Early Day** with a poster campaign; and promoting **Election Hero Day** with social media posts and by giving swag bags to Voter Friendly Campus Student Staff members.

- **Increase student voter registration integration into student life during the two months prior to an election.**
 - Hold voter registration tabling events in a variety of locations on and off our main campus, particularly in buildings that house programs in fields with lower voting rates.
 - Launch a poster campaign in campus buildings with graphics of the poster on monitors in the Student Center and athletic facilities.
 - Launch email and social media campaigns about registering to vote.
 - Designate social media ambassadors for students of color to distribute information and persuasive messages about registering to vote.
 - Provide voter registration emails to groups for students of color and for students in fields with lower voting rates.
 - Provide voter registration guest speakers to group meetings/ events for students of color and for students in fields with lower voting rates.
- **Increase student voting rates and work to elevate the voting rates of students of color during the weeks leading up to an election after registration deadlines have passed.**
 - Hold voter information tabling events in a variety of locations on and off our main campus, particularly in buildings that house programs in fields with lower voting rates.
 - Pivot the poster campaign in campus buildings and graphics of the poster on monitors in the Student Center and athletic facilities as well as the email and social media campaigns from voter registration to information about voting deadlines and options for voting from college.
 - Ask social media ambassadors for students of color to distribute information and persuasive messages about voting deadlines and options for voting from college.
 - Provide voter information emails to groups for students of color and for students in fields with lower voting rates.
 - Provide voter information guest speakers to group meetings/ events for students of color and students in fields with lower voting rates.



This action plan is being implemented on Marshall's main campus, located in Huntington, West Virginia, at sites beyond the main campus, such as the Joan C. Edwards School of Medicine, the School of Pharmacy, and the Visual Arts Center, and through digital outreach to students on all campuses and to those who are full-time online learners.

Our action plan first began to be implemented during Marshall's 2020 Week of Welcome, which preceded the start of the Fall semester. Updated action plans were submitted for 2022 and 2024. This plan will continue to be updated every other year. This plan is being implemented through the collaborative efforts of the Voter Friendly Campus Planning Team, with the incorporation of additional individuals and units who express an interest in participation. [Dr. Montserrat Miller](#) and [Dr. Jennifer Robinette](#) serve as Co-Chairs of the Voter Friendly Campus Planning Team. Our [HerdVotes website](#) is coordinated by Stephen Tipler. [Marshall University Libraries](#), [The John Deaver Drinko Academy for American Political Institutions and Civic Culture](#), the [Simon Perry Center for Constitutional Democracy](#), [Student Affairs](#), and the [Honors College](#) are among the units that work to facilitate the face-to-face dimensions of the initiative and provide voter education, civic literacy, and civil discourse programming for the campus and the community.

LEADERSHIP

People, Partners, and Accountability

Our Voter Friendly Campus Planning Team is both well-established and evolving. It includes senior administrative leaders representing key university offices and programs. Dr. Montserrat Miller, who is co-chair of the Planning Team, serves as Executive Director of the John Deaver Drinko Academy for American Political Institutions and Civic Culture. Miller reports directly to Marshall's President Brad Smith, updating him regularly on progress toward the realization of the Planning Team's goals and objectives. Leah Tolliver, Assistant Dean of Student Affairs, Cara Bailey, Honors College Assistant Dean, [Patricia Proctor](#), Director of the Simon Perry Center for Constitutional Democracy, and Michelle Biggs, Director of the HERD Academy, also serve on the team and are deeply involved in the process of planning and delivering programming. The role of these administrative leaders is to collaborate in setting goals, to seek resolutions to impediments, to mobilize support in a way that reduces silo barriers and by working together to evaluate successes and failures.

Faculty from four different units are represented on the Planning Team. These include Stephen B. Tipler (Marshall University Libraries), Patricia Proctor (Political Science), Andrew Morelock (Political Science), Sydnor Roy (Humanities) and Montserrat Miller (History).

Student Affairs is also represented on the Planning Team through Assistant Dean Leah Tolliver, Director of Community Services & Family Programs Gabe Brown, and Associate Director of Student Life Corey Cunningham.



Voter Friendly Campus Staff Member Kaylee Criner setting up a voter registration information table in the Memorial Student Center during the Fall 2024 semester.



Student volunteer Jaiden Skaff greets Voter Friendly Campus Planning Team member Diane Palmieri at our Oct. 8, 2024, Candidate Forum (co-sponsored by The League of Women Voters of the Huntington Area) and explains the process for submitting questions to ask the candidates.

Numerous students from a wide range of programs and majors have been involved in our efforts. They have joined as a consequence of their membership in Marshall's Student Government Association, Pre-Law Club, the Department of Political Science Honorary Society (Pi Sigma Alpha), the National Society of ACTA Scholars, the Honors Student Association, and the Student Athlete Advisory Committee, among others. As was the case in the 2024 election cycle, when we recruited students to participate in our voter registration/voter information tabling campaign through Marshall's online student-engagement portal, [HerdLink](#), we will be reaching out to undergraduates online, but also through individual faculty and campus leaders, in order to hire paid student staff to work in the lead up to the 2026 midterm elections. The funds to compensate students for involvement with voter registration/voter information tabling come from the Drinko Academy's budget line.

In addition to the All In Campus Democracy Challenge and the NSLVE, the Voter Friendly Campus Planning Team relies on the support and assistance of the office of the Secretary of State of West Virginia, the office of the Cabell County Clerk, and the League of Women Voters of the Huntington Area. We have also received assistance from individual members of the West Virginia Legislature, from members of the West Virginia Bar Association, and from the Supreme Court of Appeals of the State of West Virginia.

Community partner leaders who have joined our Voter Friendly Campus Planning Team include: Co-President of the League of Women Voters of the Huntington Area Wendy Thomas; Cabell County Clerk Scott Caserta; Cabell County Chief Deputy Clerk Grace Taylor; and Director of Outreach for the West Virginia Secretary of State's Office Jarrod Summers.

Other units on campus, including University Communications, Information Technology, and the Office of General Counsel, have supported key civic literacy and civil discourse programming.

Group Member Strengths and Responsibilities

The Voter Friendly Campus Planning Team members have various unique strengths. Dr. Jennifer Robinette brings a wealth of experience within and beyond academia to her role in coordinating the work of the Planning Team with students, campus partners, and community collaborators. Her expertise in public relations, planning strategic communication campaigns, and research, as well as her leadership skills, have proven particularly valuable.

[Dr. Kelli Johnson](#), who first initiated Marshall's embrace of the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge in 2020, mobilizes enthusiastic engagement with the VFC Team across institutional units and plays a leading role in bringing the university library's vital contribution to this effort to fruition. She works with Tootie Carter and Cabell County Clerk's Office officials to host our early voting precinct on campus. Tiffany Daniels, whose advanced degrees are in adult and technical education and human resources, focuses on analysis of student data and institutional strategy. Cara Bailey facilitates Honors College support of civic literacy and civil discourse initiatives on campus and helps to mobilize honors students' participation in Voter Friendly Campus activities. Michelle Biggs brings a long history of Student Government Association advising to our efforts, which facilitates greater levels of participation in the VFC efforts by student leaders. Jadan

Hudson's role is to mobilize support for democratic engagement among athletes on campus and to coordinate the participation of coaches with the Voter Friendly Campus Planning Team's efforts. Corey Cunningham coordinates with fraternities and sororities on campus, helping to engage students involved in Greek life organizations with our programmatic efforts. As head of the Drinko Academy, Dr. Montserrat Miller facilitates partnerships and resources in support of any and all voter registration/voter information efforts on campus, as well as leading major civic literacy/civil discourse initiatives, such as the Court on Campus program. Patricia Proctor, Esq., as Founding Director of the Simon Perry Center for Constitutional Democracy, is the Pre-Law Club faculty advisor and organizer of the institution's *Amicus Curiae* Lecture Series, which brings in top scholars and public figures from across the country to discuss historical and contemporary challenges to our democratic systems of governance. Other members of the team bring skills in areas such as marketing and digital communications. All members participate in planning. The Drinko Academy takes the lead on the face-to-face dimensions of our efforts; the Marshall University Libraries, and especially Stephen Tipler, take responsibility for the online components of our efforts.

Campus and Community Stakeholders Inclusivity

In sum, the Voter Friendly Campus Planning Team is inclusive in terms of its engagement with faculty, students, staff, senior administration, donors, and community stakeholders. Members represent distinct cohorts, genders, and cultural groups; as a whole, it is representative of both our student and our community populations, including a number of individuals who identify as first generation college-going Appalachians.

The Voter Friendly Campus Planning Team is strictly non-partisan and open to all in terms of ideology, gender, class, age, ability, race, religion, background, and other forms of identity. Students from a range of academic majors, sociocultural backgrounds, ages, and political perspectives have been incorporated into the planning and programmatic execution of our voter registration, voter education, and voter turnout efforts. Faculty and staff participation also reflect multiple forms of diversity.



Saturday, Aug. 17, 2024, Week of Welcome Carnival - Student Voter Friendly Campus Staff Members Quinlin Sollars and Reagan Clagg talk to new students about registering to vote.

Involving Other Offices on Campus

The identification of campus stakeholders and new partners is an ongoing endeavor, reflecting the spirit of participatory democracy that defines the culture of the Voter Friendly Campus Planning Team. In this upcoming two-year cycle, we will be consulting directly with the Office of General Counsel in order to secure advice about careful adherence to changing election law requirements that will impact our voter registration activities.

In the 2026 mid-term elections, the College of Business, the College of Engineering and Computer Science, the College of Health Professions, the School of Medicine, and the School of Pharmacy will each be asked to select a faculty member to participate in voter registration activities. Those faculty will be urged to network with other faculty and with students in their colleges in an effort to elevate student turnout in both the primary and the general elections. These academic units have been selected because NSLVE data show that students enrolled in those colleges voted at rates lower than the institution's average in 2020. The support and involvement of these faculties will be solicited through personal contact with the Deans of those academic units.

Marshall Athletics serves as an example of the maturation of democratic culture on our campus. The Student Athlete Advisory Committee was extensively involved in 2022 National Voter Registration Day tabling events. Since then, they have extended civic literacy programming for athletes. One example was their February 2024 "Your Role in Civic Engagement" program that emphasized electoral participation alongside volunteerism, activism, and advocacy as actions improving the quality of life in one's community. Marshall football players were registered to vote at this event, aided by the presence of the Cabell County Clerk, Scott Caserta, who appeared on the program and brought a voting machine that students could examine and familiarize themselves with in advance of election day. Moving forward, we have added Jadan Hudson, who is the new Director of Student-Athlete Development, to the Voter Friendly Campus Planning Team. He has agreed to enlist student-athletes to participate in the 2026 National Voter Registration Day programming and other voter registration/voter information tabling efforts that will take place at Marshall in association with the mid-term election cycle. He will also be assisting in securing the signature of all Marshall's athletic coaches on the VFC pledge that will be available as of January 2026.

Working Group Engagement

The Voter Friendly Campus Planning Team is in regular communication through email and through Teams, with face-to-face meetings taking place as needed. Email exchanges are typically initiated by Dr. Jennifer Robinette, by Dr. Kelli Johnson, or by Dr. Montserrat Miller. The process of revising our Action Plans has afforded us the opportunity to revisit, expand, and re-balance the membership on the Voter Friendly Campus Planning Team.

Working Group Continuity

As members have moved on to pursue other opportunities on campus and beyond, others have stepped up to assume those responsibilities. VFC Planning Team Co-chair Kacy Lovelace, for example, recently left Marshall to pursue a Ph.D. at Glasgow Caledonian University in Scotland. Dr. Jennifer Robinette

immediately volunteered to take her place as co-chair, and her senior colleague, Dr. Kelli Johnson, also volunteered to expand her role on the Planning Team. This smooth succession reflects the committed and collaborative culture of the Planning Team.

Leadership Succession Plan

Co-chairing the Voter Friendly Campus Planning Team has been written into the job description of the Executive Director of the Drinko Academy. When Dr. Montserrat Miller retires, the new Executive Director will assume that role and be charged with continued leadership in the project.

Work Distribution and Sustainability

The work of the coalition is shared between the co-chairs and others, including Drinko Academy and University Libraries staff and student workers, along with others on the VFC Planning Team. There is considerable enthusiasm and support for the work we do on campus, which means that our requests for assistance are usually met with positive results. We have recently broadened ownership in the program by involving Drinko Academy Student Engagement Coordinator [Reagan Clagg](#), an undergraduate and student government representative, in the Action Plan review, analysis, and revision process. She has helped us to conceptualize how student involvement could be made perennial through the designation of one student government officer to take responsibility for participating as a member of the VFC Planning Team. While the coalition may have depended too much on one person in the past, we have worked for several years to broaden not just participation, but also a sense of ownership and responsibility among members of the Voter Friendly Campus Planning Team.

COMMITMENT

Marshall University's institutional commitment to civic learning and democratic engagement is evidenced in our [Mission](#), [Vision](#), and [Creed](#) Statements, our Core Curriculum, our programming priorities, and administrative, faculty, staff, and student culture.

Mission & Vision Alignment

Marshall University's [Mission Statement](#) references the **sybiotic relationship between higher education and a vibrant and pluralistic civil society**.

"Marshall University is a public comprehensive university with a rich history as one of the oldest institutions of higher learning in West Virginia. Founded in 1837 and named after Chief Justice John Marshall, definer of the Constitution, Marshall University advances the public good through innovative, accredited educational programs. Marshall University's mission, inspired by our Vision and Creed, calls for faculty, staff, and students to:

- *Contribute to the quality of life of the community, region, and beyond through applied research, economic development, health care, and cultural enrichment.*
- *Cultivate the development of an inclusive, just, and equitable community."*

Marshall University's [Vision Statement](#) emphasizes a **strong connection between the work of the university and a broader sense of public well-being**, asserting that Marshall University



Simon Perry Center for Constitutional Democracy Director Patricia Proctor, Esq., speaks at a 2022 Women's Equality Day Luncheon on campus.

seeks “to inspire learning and creativity that ignites the mind, nurtures the spirit, and fulfills the promise of a better future.”

The [Marshall University Creed](#) goes a step further by **setting forth ideals of civility, civic commitment, and democratic engagement.**

“The students, faculty, and staff of Marshall University pledge to pursue the development of our intellects and the expansion of knowledge, and to *devote ourselves to defending individual rights and exercising civic responsibility.*”

We are an educational community in which all members work together to promote and strengthen teaching and learning; *...an open community uncompromisingly protecting freedom of thought, belief and expression; a civil community treating all individuals and groups with consideration, decency, and respect, and expressing disagreements in rational ways; a responsible community accepting obligations and following behavioral guidelines designed to support the common good; a safe community respecting each other's rights, privacy and property; a well community respecting and promoting physical and emotional health; an ethical community reflecting honesty, integrity and fairness in both academic and extracurricular activities; a pluralistic community celebrating and learning from our diversity; a socially conscious community acting as citizens of the world and seeking to contribute to the betterment of people and their environments; and a judicious community remaining alert to the threats posed by hatred, intolerance and other injustices and ever-prepared to correct them.*”

Senior Leadership & Institutional Culture

There is a significant and highly visible commitment on the part of the President, who has signed the [ALL IN Presidents' Commitment to Full Student Voter Participation](#). The President's enthusiasm for community engagement reverberates across campus. The commitment extends through the institutional hierarchy to administrators, faculty, staff, and students and is highly visible both internally and externally.

Action Plan & Civic Learning Outcomes Assessment

Marshall University created and began implementing the first iteration of this action plan in 2020. The plan was updated in 2022 and 2024 and will continue to be updated every two years based on our long-term and short-term goal progress and changes in

the political landscape. The plan guides implementation of our Voter Friendly Campus initiatives to strengthen civic learning and democratic engagement at Marshall, to increase voter registration integration into student life, and to increase the voting rates of Marshall students. Civic learning and democratic engagement are prioritized in both the curriculum and in co-curricular programming.

Marshall University's [general education requirements](#) are built around nine domains of critical thinking, all of which relate directly to the skills and values upon which democratic political cultures are based. These nine domains of critical thinking are: “communication fluency, creative thinking, **ethical and civic thinking**, information literacy, inquiry-based thinking, integrative thinking, intercultural thinking, metacognitive thinking, and quantitative thinking.”

Illiteracy in any of these domains threatens democracy because democratic engagement depends upon the ability of citizens to wrestle with complex problems, exhibit tolerance of cultural differences, engage in self-reflection, make thoughtful and informed decisions about both quantitative and qualitative information, engage in reasoned debate, and to formulate creative efforts to address social challenges.

Marshall University policy mandates that all course syllabi list each of the nine domains that are among the learning outcomes. Presented in the form of a grid, the domains are set forth and aligned with how the skillset will be practiced and how mastery will be measured. [Criteria for the ethical and civic thinking student learning outcome states](#): “Students will determine the origins of core beliefs and ethical principles, **evaluate** the ethical basis of professional rules and standards of conduct, **evaluate** how academic theories and public policy inform one another to support **civic well-being**, and **analyze** complex ethical problems to address competing interests.” All programs at the university undergo an annual assessment process and submit an [annual Assessment Report](#). All programs also undergo a Five-Year Review process, which allows departments to fine-tune their course offerings to better support the relevant domains of critical thinking for that discipline.

These policies apply to face-to-face and online synchronous and asynchronous classes, as well as to all of Marshall's campuses in Huntington, South Charleston, and Point Pleasant, West Virginia.

Commitment to Civic Learning Curriculum

An analysis of syllabi and assignments aligned to [Marshall's Baccalaureate Degree Profile \(BDP\) for the academic year 2024-2025](#) established that up to 31 online and 63 face-to-face courses were aligned to the “ethical and civic thinking” general education learning outcome.

Another way in which Marshall demonstrates our commitment to improving civic learning is through the inclusion of a wide array of undergraduate courses that carry an “American Institutions” attribute in the curriculum. Thirty-four classes in the [Marshall Course Catalog](#) are currently designated as such.

[The Simon Perry Center for Constitutional Democracy](#) program evidencing the institution's commitment to civic learning is

the [interdisciplinary minor in Constitutional Democracy](#).

The program “is designed to promote the study of the U.S. Constitution, the Supreme Court, the legal application of the Constitution, and U.S. politics and governance.” Popular among undergraduates preparing to study the law, the minor in Constitutional Democracy provides all students at Marshall an opportunity to take courses focusing on civic learning and democratic engagement.

Marshall University’s commitments to civic learning and democratic engagement are also evidenced in the programming priorities of our co-curricular initiatives.

Commitment to Democratic Engagement Co-Curriculum

Marshall also offers an [Ethical and Civic Thinking durable skills microcredential](#), which is **free for faculty, staff, and students**. It is “designed to help learners strengthen their ability to...engage responsibly in civic life” and “focuses on developing essential competencies in ethical reasoning and civic engagement....”

In addition, Constitution Month co-curricular programming has established annual traditions at Marshall for National Voter Registration Day and Constitution Day celebrations. The civic learning and democratic engagement curricular and co-curricular landscape at Marshall University has been honed by each iteration of our action plan.

Involving a range of disciplines, stakeholders, and perspectives, Marshall University offers students a wide and rich variety of civic learning/democratic engagement opportunities. Three units at the institution exemplify this: the [John Deaver Drinko Academy for American Political Institutions and Civic Culture](#), the [Simon Perry Center for Constitutional Democracy](#), and the [Dr. Carter G. Woodson Lyceum](#). These units are independent from one another, but coordinate their initiatives on a regular basis.

LANDSCAPE

Civic learning and democratic engagement are prioritized in both the curriculum and in the co-curricular institutional landscape.

Civic Learning Curriculum Landscape

Marshall University’s [general education requirements](#) are built around nine domains of critical thinking, all of which relate directly to the skills and values upon which democratic political cultures are based (see above). The **ethical and civic thinking** domain, specifically, requires students to “evaluate the ethical basis of professional rules and standards of conduct” and to “**evaluate how academic theories and public policy inform one another to support civic well-being.**”

Civic learning and democratic engagement concepts are highlighted most obviously and directly in the courses that make up the [Interdisciplinary Minor in Constitutional Democracy](#), in the W. Page Pitt School of Journalism and Mass Communications, and in courses offered by the departments of Political Science, History, Sociology, Counseling, and Classics. Students enrolled in these classes are most likely to take advantage of co-curricular civic literacy and civil discourse opportunities offered in association with the [Drinko Academy](#), the [Simon Perry Center for Constitutional Democracy](#), and the [Dr. Carter G. Woodson Lyceum](#).

Democratic Engagement Co-Curriculum Landscape

Marshall University also has long-featured a very vibrant Student Government Association, which operates a key civic institution on campus and is integrated into the President’s self-governing structure. SGA attracts student engagement from every school, program, and major. Participation in SGA is an important form of co-curricular civic learning and democratic engagement. Students participating in SGA frequently attend the civic literacy and civil discourse programming offered on campus.

Among the units most frequently offering co-curricular opportunities for civic learning and democratic engagement is the [John Deaver Drinko Academy for American Political Institutions and Civic Culture](#). Established in 1994, the [Drinko Academy](#) has worked for more than three decades to encourage initiatives that engender public commitment to civic engagement as a means of strengthening our democracy. The [Simon Perry Center for Constitutional Democracy](#), established in 2011, is another unit deeply committed to offering co-curricular civic learning and democratic engagement opportunities.



Sept. 16, 2024, National Voter Registration Day - 2024 Co-Chair Kacy Lovelace, student volunteer Hannah Walters, Lee Dean from the WV Secretary of State’s Office, student volunteer Laura Hundley, Student Voter Friendly Campus Staff Member Kaylee Criner, and 2026 Co-Chair Jennifer Robinette.



At the beginning of the **fall semester** each year, the Drinko Academy and the Simon Perry Center organize what has become a **more than month-long celebration of the U.S. Constitution**. Then, throughout the academic year, these two units sponsor a range of programs designed to reinforce respect for the rule of law and to elevate civic literacy levels among campus and community constituencies.

Since 2020, for example, the Drinko Academy and the Simon Perry Center have worked to coordinate annual programming for Women's Equality Day (August 26th) as a way to kick off the U.S. Constitution Celebration. Women's Equality programming has involved films, panel discussions, and lectures about the history of women's efforts to exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. A number of these programs have been presented in collaboration with the League of Women Voters.

The annual U.S. Constitution Month programming involves the participation of the Drinko Academy and the Simon Perry Center, alongside other members of the Voter Friendly Campus Planning Team, in annual National Voter Registration Day activities for students. The Simon Perry Center and Drinko Academy are also responsible for organizing the university's **annual Constitution and Citizenship Day programming**.

Crucially, the Simon Perry Center organizes [the *Amicus Curiae* Lecture Series](#), Marshall University's single most successful and high-profile civic learning outreach program. *Amicus Curiae* lecturers address critical questions about the history of, and contemporary challenges to, our constitutional system of government. Typically, two or three nationally recognized authors, scholars, and/or jurists are brought in per semester to deliver lectures to audiences, averaging 250-300 people. Attendees include faculty, staff, and students, along with attorneys earning Continuing Legal Education credits, local high school social studies students, community members, and individuals from area assisted living facilities. The lectures are free and open to the public, and they are recorded, edited, and later broadcast on West Virginia Public Television. Audience response forms collected at each lecture offer the Simon Perry Center an opportunity to gauge the effectiveness of the programming. The *Amicus Curiae* Lecture Series is one of the most successful ways in which Marshall University uses co-curricular programming to communicate our commitment to civic learning and democratic engagement.

The **2024-2025 *Amicus Curiae* Lecture Series** featured five programs. Historian Elisabeth Griffith, author of *Formidable: American Women and the Fight for Equality, 1920-2020*, offered a Women's Equality Day lecture on August 29th that was entitled: "A Constitutional Quandary: Where Are the Women?" On September 17th, historian and eminent scholar of the early national period of American History, Denver Brunsman, presented a U.S. Constitution and Citizenship Day lecture entitled "Neither to Stretch nor Relax: George Washington, Executive Power, and the Constitution." On November 19th, historian and Chair of War Studies at the U.S. Army War College Michael S. Neiberg presented a lecture entitled "Democracy, Power, and War: The Role of Americans in Foreign Wars." Spring semester 2025 *Amicus Curiae* lectures included a March 27th presentation by Maggie Lemos, Professor of Law at Duke School of Law, entitled "Supreme Court Reform, Politics, and Polarization." Finally, on April 17th, Jared Fishman, founder and executive director of the Justice Innovation Lab, presented a lecture entitled "What does it take to fix our communities? Lessons learned from a lifetime of fighting injustice."



Students attend the 2024 Dan O'Hanlon Essay Competition Awards Ceremony in the Simon Perry Center for Constitutional Democracy at Marshall.

The 2025-2026 *Amicus Curiae* Lecture Series is slated to feature four programs. On August 28th, Rutgers University Associate Professor of Political Science Kelly Dittmar offered a Women's Equality Day lecture that was entitled: "Progress is Not Inevitable: Gender Dynamics in Today's Politics." It was followed by a U.S. Constitution and Citizenship Day lecture, delivered on September 25th by University of Maryland Professor of History Richard Bell that was entitled: "Shall Not be Denied or Abridged: The Right to Vote in America." On October 28th, Iowa College of Law professor Samantha Barbas presented a lecture entitled: "Actual Malice: Civil Rights and Freedom of the Press in *New York Times v. Sullivan*." Spring 2026 lectures will include a presentation by Sarah Pearsall, historian and professor at Johns Hopkins University.

The impact of the *Amicus Curiae* Lecture Series extends beyond Huntington, frequently drawing audience members from the Charleston area and from Marshall's other campuses. The subsequent broadcast of lectures on West Virginia Public Television further amplifies the Lecture Series impact, reaching audiences from around the state.

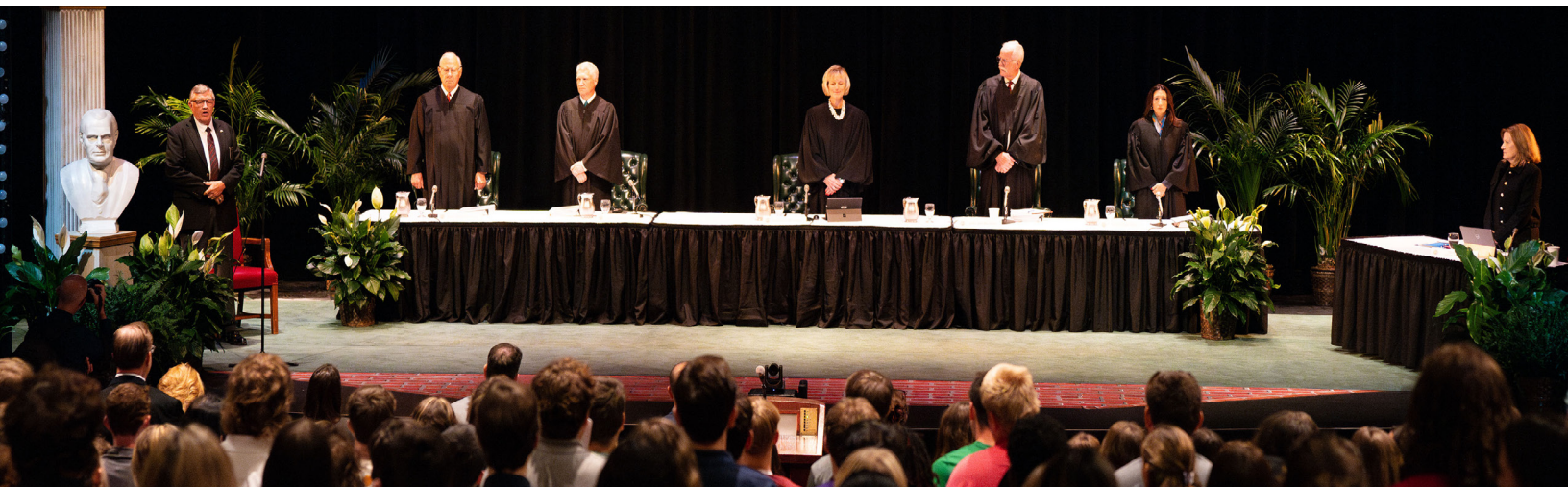
The Simon Perry Center also holds an annual [Dan O'Hanlon Essay Competition](#), which invites students to grapple with burning questions about our contemporary political system. In 2024, the essay prompt asked students to "identify an issue important to you that is at stake in this year's election, to research and explain the various positions taken by politicians and others on your issue, and

to propose solutions." In 2025, the essay prompt was: "Do income inequality and wealth inequality impact the health of representative democracy in the United States?"

Working in a collaborative partnership, the Drinko Academy, the Simon Perry Center, and the Office of the President regularly host **Court on Campus programs** that are designed to advance civic literacy, model civil discourse, and underpin respect for the rule of law. These programs have involved the Supreme Court of Appeals of West Virginia, as well as the United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit. In 2025, Marshall's U.S. Constitution Celebration again included a Court on Campus program featuring the Supreme Court of Appeals of West Virginia holding oral argument sessions on the main campus with large groups of faculty, staff, students, and community members in attendance. Pre-Law Club and Student Government members were given the opportunity to speak with justices and court staff at a luncheon following the oral arguments and an evening reception at the home of the President.

The [Dr. Carter G. Woodson Lyceum](#) is another initiative through which the institution communicates our co-curricular civic learning and democratic engagement commitments to both internal and external audiences. Among its many undertakings, the Woodson Lyceum coordinates Black History Month celebrations at the university. The Lyceum's programs have included annual Carter G. Woodson lectures by nationally recognized figures such as: Dr. Carla Hayden, U.S. Librarian of Congress; Dr. Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, Chair of the Department of History at Harvard University; Dr. Jerome M. Adams, former U.S. Surgeon General; Dr. William Turner, professor emeritus of Black and Appalachian Studies at Berea College; and Brent Leggs, Senior Vice President at the National Trust for Historic Places. Each of these distinguished speakers addressed issues related to history, civic learning, and democratic engagement. Notably, [Dr. Higginbotham's 2020 presentation](#), entitled "African Americans and the Vote," addressed the complex histories of both the 15th and the 19th amendments to the U.S. Constitution and the impediments to African American access to the ballot over the course of the last 150 years. The Woodson Lyceum's annual Carter G. Woodson Lectures have attracted sizeable face-to-face and online audiences comprised of faculty, staff, and students, along with members of the public, elected officials, and state and federal government representatives.

The Lyceum's Black History Month programming also includes poster design contests for students on Marshall's campus and for local students in grades K-12. The Lyceum plays a very significant role in outreach and collaboration with a wide variety of constituencies in the community.





In sum, the activities and programs of the Drinko Academy, the Simon Perry Center, and the Woodson Lyceum provide rich civic learning and democratic engagement co-curricular programming opportunities that are enjoyed by large numbers of students, faculty, staff, and community members.

Marshall Libraries

[Marshall University's Government Documents Depository](#), a selective Federal Depository Library since 1925, stands as the **second-largest federal publications collection in West Virginia**, serving both the university community and the citizens of the 3rd Congressional District. Housed in the Drinko Library and managed by knowledgeable staff, it offers free access to a broad range of U.S. government publications in print, microform, maps, videos, and digital formats. The depository ensures transparency and empowers community engagement by organizing and providing vital legislative bills, presidential papers, statistical data, and agency reports—supporting informed civic participation and academic research. Its strategic move to Drinko Library in 2022 increased visibility and accessibility, reinforcing its role as a public resource where students, scholars, and residents can explore government documents, track policy developments, and engage critically with public affairs. This depository not only bolsters educational objectives but also underpins democratic engagement by facilitating citizens' access to the foundational records of government.

Internal Barriers

The highly favorable landscape for democratic engagement and civic learning at Marshall is not free of challenges emanating from within and beyond the institution. Internally, students, faculty, and staff alike are faced with an expanding set of demands upon their time. Undergraduates almost universally need to work part-time jobs in order to afford the cost of college, while their professors face the need to publish or perish alongside their heavy teaching loads (typically four courses per semester/phasing now with Marshall's R2 status to a three and three load). Staff are working diligently to meet the goals set forth by President Smith to transform the university into a leaner, more responsive, and more technologically sophisticated node in the transnational network that is higher education. Surmounting the time-crunch impediment that everyone faces involves significant investment in face-to-face networking one student, one colleague, and one staff partner at a time. In addressing this internal challenge, gestures of goodwill and demonstrations of respect and support for others' work and programming initiatives are vital because they help to build the internal culture of mutual support upon which democratic engagement and civic learning depends.

External Barriers

Externally, political polarization, the vitriolic tenor of our public discourse about people running for office, policy issues, and public institutions, declining levels of civic and media literacy, and growing attachments to conspiratorial frameworks have combined to complicate the work of democratic engagement and civic learning at Marshall. These broader cultural and sociopolitical trends impact students, faculty, and staff in at least two notable respects. In some, they engender disquieting levels of hostility toward those holding viewpoints other than their own. In others, they cause a conscious withdrawal from politics. Here, modeling civil discourse in the discussion of contentious issues, and operationalizing the institution's vision statement both work to counteract the insidious impact of these external challenges. Marshall's vision, "to inspire learning and creativity that ignites the mind, nurtures the spirit, and fulfills the promise of a better future," serves as a clarion call to revitalize political discourse on campus and to redouble our efforts to nurture the spirit of open-minded curiosity upon which all scholarly pursuit depends, and which remains central to the effective exercise of the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.

Federal and state legislation have presented additional challenges. In 2025, the West Virginia legislature passed several bills related to voting:

- SB 50 – Requiring municipal elections to be held on the same day as statewide elections
- SB 487 – Removing ineligible voters from active voter rolls
- SB 490 – Prohibiting ranked-choice voting in elections
- SB 586 – Relating to requirements for filling vacancies in certain elected federal, state, and county office
- HB 2709 – Permitting voters with a change of address to vote in his/her new precinct without having to cast a provisional ballot
- HB 3016 – Photo voter identification required at the polls

Student Body Demographics

[Marshall University](#) has a total [student population](#) of 12,318. Of that number, 60% are female and 40% are male. Nearly three-quarters (74.4%) of students are undergraduates, 21.2% are graduate students, and 4.4% are working towards a first professional degree (e.g. MD, PharmD, DPT).

Many Marshall students are first generation with neither parent possessing a college degree. The [Marshall For All program](#), made possible through a unique combination of scholarships, grants, work opportunities, and family contributions, offers the opportunity for students to graduate from college

debt-free. A tuition and fee-free option for West Virginia residents has recently been added.

Marshall is a predominantly White institution, with only 14.4% of students identifying as minorities (excluding those who did not report minority status). Marshall has students from 49 states, the District of Columbia, and 51 countries.

Eighty percent of Marshall students are from West Virginia; and 91.2% of Marshall students are from the Appalachian region, specifically Appalachian counties in the states of Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia. A quarter (24.7%) of Marshall students (3,038) are from Cabell County, West Virginia, and can vote early at the Drinko Library on campus if they are registered to vote.

Internal/External Success Factors

Unlike other institutions that are feeling the brunt of the enrollment cliff, Marshall University has experienced steadily growing enrollment over the past three years - an [increase of 12% since 2022](#). By dismantling the barriers to enrollment and student success, Marshall has given students, faculty, and staff the space to [live our creed](#).

There are many examples of Marshall University’s programmatic commitment to civic learning and democratic engagement. From the Medical School to the Pharmacy School, to the Social Work Program, to Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, to the Women’s Center, to the Pre-Law Club and the Political Science Honorary, there is a culture of civic commitment that faculty impart to students and/or that students bring to campus of their own accord, inspiring faculty to collaborate in the realization of a myriad civic goals. That culture is evidenced individually among the staff and collectively through Staff Council civic projects. It is evidenced in the Student Government Association’s work to make early voting available on campus and in the work of Student Affairs to create co-curricular resumes demonstrating civic education and involvement and to provide new tools such as TURBOVote. It is evidenced in the Department of Political Science’s various Legislative internship programs and in the Faculty Senate’s organization of Legislative fora for the university community. The university’s institutional culture of participatory democracy is reflected in our commitment to shared governance and our current efforts to redefine and reinvigorate what that means.

Marshall University’s commitment as an institution to improving civic learning and democratic engagement is strong and clearly visible to both external and internal audiences. While civic learning and democratic engagement take many forms, informed citizen participation in the electoral process is one of the most vital components of successful self-government. Low voter registration and voter turnout rates are a threat to democracy and must be addressed from multiple angles; higher education has a vital role to play in inculcating habits of responsible citizenship. The institution’s Mission, Vision, and Creed statements, our Core Curriculum, programming priorities, civic culture, leadership, and formal structures of democratic engagement all collectively prepare Marshall to undertake new efforts to advance student electoral participation.



Additional Resources Required

Our efforts would be strengthened by additional funding that would be used to pay for events, including local and national speakers, food, and swag. An additional Graduate Assistant or Intern devoted exclusively to the Voter Friendly Campus initiative would also help us focus more on achieving our goals.

GOALS

Marshall University's NSLVE participation was reauthorized in 2022. Our short-term goals involve strategies for measurable progress toward our long-term goals through 2032.

Long-Term Goals

1. Strengthen civic learning at Marshall by doubling the number of students who take courses with the "American Institutions" attribute and quadrupling the number who complete the Constitutional Democracy minor by 2032.
2. Strengthen democratic engagement at Marshall through 2032 by celebrating all five civic holidays annually.
3. Increase voter registration integration into student life by making voter registration information available in all places on and off our main campus and through at least five communication channels by 2032.
4. Increase student voting rates to exceed national student voting rates by 2032.
5. Elevate the voting rates of students of color to the same rate as white students by 2032.

Short-Term Goals

1. Strengthen civic learning at Marshall by: Expanding the number of courses offered with the "American Institutions" attribute by 2027; increasing the number of students who take

"American Institutions" courses by 25% by 2028; and increasing the number of students who complete the Constitutional Democracy minor by 90% by 2028.

2. Strengthen democratic engagement at Marshall by increasing the number of civic holidays we celebrate annually from three to four by 2027 and to five by 2028.

3. Increase voter registration integration into student life by meeting students where they are and increasing the number of buildings where voter registration information is available on and off campus from six to 10 different locations and increasing the number of communication channels utilized for reaching students from two to five different channels by 2027.

4. Increase student voting rates to meet national student voting rates by 2028.

5. Elevate the voting rates of students of color to at least 75% the rate of white students by 2028.

Resources

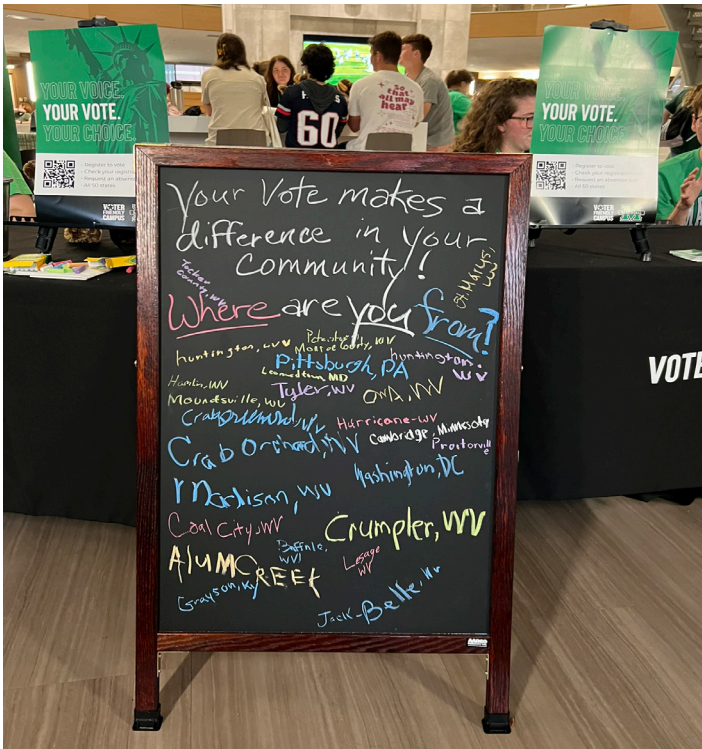
In order to achieve these long-term and short-term goals, the Voter Friendly Campus Planning Team will need to depend upon the allocation of adequate fiscal and human resources. Democratic engagement and civic learning programming is supported across the institution from a range of programs and initiatives, while face-to-face voter registration/voter information costs are absorbed from the Drinko Academy's regular budget line. It will be vital that the Office of the President remain informed of the costs involved and willing to support those efforts if unanticipated expenses occur. The ongoing commitment of units such as University Libraries to supporting faculty and staff investments of time and intellectual capital in the effort are every bit as urgent as are fiscal allocations.

As we expand our Voter Friendly Campus initiatives in pursuit of increasingly ambitious long-term and short-term goals, greater resources will need to be allocated, particularly in terms of part-time student assistants to coordinate student engagement and outreach. Through the use of Drinko Academy funds, we will employ two student engagement coordinators each semester and 10 or more Voter Friendly Campus Student Staff members during the Fall semester of election years. Also, partnering with the Secretary of State's office and the Cabell County Clerk's office provides vital additional resources for voter education and registration.

STRATEGY

Marshall's curricular commitment to civic learning as a general education learning outcome and to co-curricular programming promoting civic literacy and civil discourse pre-dates our first Action Plan. Marshall University is a campus that is firmly committed to civic learning, democratic engagement, and voter participation by students, faculty, and staff.

This commitment has only grown since we began participating in the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge. Since 2020, we have increased the number of students on our Voter Friendly Campus Staff to 10 during Presidential election years and developed a training tool to educate student workers and other members of our coalition to ensure more effective voter registration engagement compliant with all laws.



Our capacity and competence has deepened with the implementation of each iteration of our Action Plan. The strategies outlined below are designed to sustain our momentum toward pursuit of our long-term and short-term goals beyond a single election.

1. Strengthen civic learning at Marshall.

- Help facilitate courses that should have the “American Institutions” attribute secure designation by working with the Provost and faculty who teach those courses beginning in Spring 2026.
- Promote “American Institutions” courses and the Constitutional Democracy minor with an email to all students and social media posts during Add/Drop week every semester.

2. Strengthen democratic engagement at Marshall.

- Use **Campus Takeover toolkits** to maximize student engagement and civic holiday celebrations.
- Post photos and videos on the [university’s Instagram](#) with President Smith and our mascot Marco in civic-themed costumes and settings to promote civic holiday celebrations.
- Promote civic holidays and events on our [HerdVotes website](#).
- Celebrate **National Voter Registration Day** annually in September with a **tabling event** on the Student Center Plaza.
- Celebrate **Constitution Day** annually with an **interactive trivia game event for students** in September as part of Marshall’s annual Constitution Month celebration.
- Promote our “[Take the Pledge to read the U.S. Constitution](#)” [new online form](#) and access to read the Constitution online.
- Celebrate **National Voter Education Week** in early October with **daily voter registration/information tabling events** in various buildings on and off our main campus, particularly those that house programs in fields with lower voting rates according to our most recent NSLVE data (English Language and Literature; Visual and Performing Arts; Parks and Recreation; Liberal Arts and Sciences, Humanities; Education).
- Promote **Vote Early Day** in late October with a **poster campaign** in buildings on and off our main campus, particularly those that house programs in fields with lower voting rates, and display graphics of the poster on monitors in the Student Center and athletic facilities.
- Celebrate **Election Hero Day** the day before an election with **social media posts about people helping transport voters to the polls, etc.**, and by giving **swag bags to Voter Friendly Campus student staff members**.

3. Increase voter registration integration into student life during the two months preceding an election.

- **Ask President Smith to send a brief email to students, faculty, and staff each semester**, in election and non-election years, emphasizing the importance of civic responsibility and voter registration and including the [TurboVote](#) link.
- Hold **weekly voter registration tabling events** with information about registration deadlines and registering to



vote from college in a variety of locations on and off our main campus, particularly in campus buildings that house programs in fields with lower voting rates according to our most recent NSLVE data (English Language and Literature; Visual and Performing Arts; Parks and Recreation; Liberal Arts and Sciences, Humanities; Education); and **promote tabling events** via **student-facing events webpages** ([Marshall University Events Calendar](#)) and apps ([HerdLink](#), which will soon be [HerdLife](#)).

- Hold voter registration events at **Marshall University football games**.
 - Launch a **voter registration poster campaign** with information about registration deadlines and options for registering to vote from college in campus buildings, particularly those that house programs in fields with lower voting rates, and display graphics of the poster on monitors in the Student Center and athletic facilities.
 - Launch a **voter registration email campaign** about registration deadlines and options for registering to vote from college; **ask coaches to sign the ALL IN Coaches pledge** and send an email to their athletes about registering to vote including the [TurboVote](#) link.
 - Launch a **voter registration social media campaign** about registration deadlines and options for registering to vote from college.
 - Provide **voter registration guest speakers for group meetings/events** for students in fields with lower voting rates.
- ### 4. Increase student voting rates during the weeks leading up to an election after voter registration deadlines have passed.
- Urge students to create a **concrete plan for how they will cast their vote from college** by leveraging our famous “We are...” slogan - “At Marshall, we are voters! What’s your plan?” Are you eligible to vote early in the Drinko Library on campus? If not, will you be able to travel home to cast your vote on election day? If not, when are the deadlines for requesting an absentee ballot and putting your completed ballot in the mail? [TurboVote](#) will be a tremendous asset, once again, during this phase of the campaign.

- **Encourage President Smith to cancel classes at Marshall on election day**, enabling students to go vote in their home precincts **and to announce an election-day university-wide class cancellation early in the semester** to help students and faculty plan ahead.
- **Hold weekly voter information tabling events** with information about voting deadlines and options for voting from college in a variety of locations on and off our main campus, particularly in campus buildings that house programs in fields with lower voting rates (English Language and Literature; Visual and Performing Arts; Parks and Recreation; Liberal Arts and Sciences, Humanities; Education); **and promote tabling events via student-facing events webpages ([Marshall University Events Calendar](#)) and apps ([HerdLink](#), which will soon be [HerdLife](#)).**
- Pivot to a **voter information poster campaign** focused on voting deadlines and options for voting from college in campus buildings, particularly those that house programs in fields with lower voting rates, and display graphics of the poster on monitors in the Student Center and athletic facilities.
- Send **voter information email reminders** about voting deadlines and options for voting from college; and ask coaches to send an email about voting to their athletes.
- Post **voter information social media reminders** about voting deadlines and options for voting from college.
- Provide **voter information guest speakers for group meetings/events** for students in fields with lower voting rates.

5. Elevate the voting rates of students of color to the same rate as white students.

- Provide **voter registration emails then voter information emails to groups for students of color** through ACE – Access, Connections, and Engagement, which includes Black United Students, NPHC, Intercultural Hispanic Organization, and the Pan-African Student Organization.
- Recruit **students of color social media ambassadors** to distribute information and persuasive messages about registering to vote then about voting deadlines and options for voting from college.
- Provide **voter registration then voter information guest speakers for group meetings/events for students of color** through ACE.

Ultimately, every member of the Marshall family should actively exercise the rights, and shoulder the responsibilities, of democracy. These strategies will ensure that our Action Plan helps the university live up to this ideal.

NSLVE

NSLVE data on student voting at Marshall University has proven indispensable to our efforts. It has allowed us to identify notable successes while also pointing to ongoing challenges that spur us to continue our work. As of December 2025, the available data allow us to compare registration rates, yield rates, and voting rates for the 2016 and 2020 presidential elections, as well as for the 2014,

2018, and 2022 mid-term elections. They also allow us to see more nuanced patterns related to fields of study, race and ethnicity, and age cohorts.

NSLVE data show that Marshall's **student voter registration rate** has climbed in both Presidential and mid-term election years. It rose from 84% to 88% between 2016 and 2020, and from 71% to 84% over the course of the 2014, 2018, and 2022 election cycles. Notably, Marshall student voter registration rates between 2014 and 2022 remained consistently above the average of all the institutions involved in the NSLVE study.

NSLVE data show that Marshall student **voter yield rates** have climbed in both the Presidential and mid-term election years. It rose from 61% to 73% between 2016 and 2020, and from 28% to 30% over the course of the 2014, 2018, and 2022 election cycles (with a spike to 45% in 2018). Marshall's yield rates lag a bit behind the average of all the institutions involved in the NSLVE study.

And NSLVE data also show that Marshall's **voting rates** have climbed in in both the Presidential and mid-term election. It rose from 51% to 64% between 2016 and 2020, and from 20% to 25% over the course of the 2014, 2018, and 2022 election cycles (with a spike to 37% in 2018). Here, Marshall's voting rate since 2018 has lagged behind the average of all the institutions involved in the NSLVE study.

The data available from the NSLVE have permitted us to see variations in voting rates by disciplines. This has inspired us to reach out to those disciplines whose voting rates have been below the university average with voter registration/voter information tabling efforts located in buildings where those classes take place. Without the NSLVE data, we would be unaware of those disciplinary disparities.

NSLVE data also help us to better understand voting rates on campus by race and ethnicity. We can see that voting rates among students identifying as Black more than doubled, from 23% to 49%, between 2018 and 2020 but fell abysmally in 2022. Likewise, voting rates among students identifying as Hispanic rose from 33% to 55% between 2018 and 2020, but fell to 19% in 2022. The precipitous drops in 2022 indicate the need for us to redouble our efforts to reach out to students of color.

It is also interesting to note that voting rates among students identifying as two or more races have been higher than the overall average for the university in recent years. In 2018, when Marshall's voting rate was 37%, it was 38% among students identifying as two or more races; in 2020 and 2022 it was also one percent higher than the university average. While perhaps not statistically significant, such data certainly call for further investigation and analysis.

NSLVE data suggests that our strategies are working, though clearly, other factors related to state and national politics and social media have concurrently acted to both drive up and discourage voting rates across the country.

It would be useful to have data for R2 state-funded institutions of higher learning with which to compare Marshall's student voting patterns. We look forward to seeing the 2024 data as soon as it is available so that we can refine our plans accordingly.

EVALUATION

Our vision for a successful Voter Friendly Campus is one where voter registration rates continue to climb with each election cycle, and one where voter turnout for elections meets or exceeds national student voting rates. Evaluating the effectiveness of our Voter Friendly Campus Action Plan implementation will involve **ongoing analysis of key performance indicators and goal outcomes compared to baseline data for the purpose of adapting our strategies to ensure success.**

NSLVE data provides critical information for evaluating our progress and adjusting our goals and this Action Plan as we receive new data about our civic participation rates on campus. Demographic information related to age, ethnicity, sex, education level, and field of study inspires new ways of reaching groups who are underrepresented in our efforts to improve voter registration rates and voter turnout. We will also evaluate the success of our outreach efforts, including event attendance and types of interactions. Finally, we will continue to evaluate the impact of Marshall's early voting precinct - the first on-campus early voting precinct in the state of West Virginia - and our efforts to spread the word about it on campus.

Evaluations will be conducted by members of our Voter Friendly Campus Planning Team, which is made up of faculty and staff from various units across campus. Evaluations will be **conducted in the Spring of each election year** in preparation for our Fall strategy implementation. **Results will be used by campus individuals and groups involved in our Voter Friendly Campus initiatives.** Evaluations will be **structured based on the Ask Every Student framework** to determine how successfully we integrated voter registration into student life, executed democratic engagement tactics, and institutionalized sustainable civic learning tactics into campus culture. In addition to the NSLVE Report and analysis of recent voter registration and turnout data, the following information will provide valuable insights for measuring progress:

- **HerdVotes website traffic metrics** provided by Stephen Tipler will be used to track the degree to which we captured our audience's attention and interest.
- **HerdLink/HerdLife data** provided by Gabe Brown will be used to track audience interest in our events.
- **Attendance of civic holiday events** will be used to measure face-to-face democratic engagement.
- **Outlook Viva Insights** will be used to track the reach of our email campaign based on how many recipients open the emails.
- **Instagram analytics** will be used to track the reach, impressions, and engagement of our social media posts.
- Our **"Take the Pledge to read the U.S. Constitution" return post-cards and new online form submissions** will be used to track the reach of this strategy to bolster civic culture.
- **Marshall's Baccalaureate Degree Profile (BDP) General Education Assessment Report**, which is published every three years, provides data for measuring progress on the "ethical and civic thinking" learning outcome and the "civic well-being" trait.
- **Institutional Research data** will be used to measure our impact on civic learning at Marshall.

For instance, a total of 1,834 unique students took at least one American Institutions course from Fall 2024 to Summer 2025. We want to double these numbers by 2032 to 3,668 by expanding the number of courses offered, which is currently 34. We are targeting a 25% increase by 2028, which would be 561 more students for a total of 2,803 unique students completing an "American Institutions" course. A total of eight students completed the Constitutional Democracy minor from Fall 2024 to Summer 2025. We have substantial room to grow here. Thus, we are targeting a 90% increase by 2028 to 15 students and quadruple growth by 2032 to 32 students completing the Constitutional Democracy minor during the previous year.



From August 2024 to December 2025, our **HerdVotes website** had 1,251 views with a majority visiting the **home page**, 5% viewing the **Voter Friendly Campus Action Plan**, 6.6% viewing the **Ambassadors page**, and 7% viewing the **Events page**. Views spiked dramatically from the beginning of September to the beginning of November 2024, indicating increased interest.

REPORTING

The **Marshall University Voter Friendly Campus Action Plan** and our NSLVE Reports are publicly available to external stakeholders on our **HerdVotes website** and the **ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge website**. Sharing the NSLVE data and our Action Plan on our HerdVotes website makes essential information readily available to everyone on campus so they can reach out to students.

These documents are also shared internally via emails to our Voter Friendly Campus Planning Team members, our community partners, and campus groups and individuals involved with our Voter Friendly Campus initiatives as well as with units like Student Affairs that may want to have a larger role in implementation of the plan in the future.

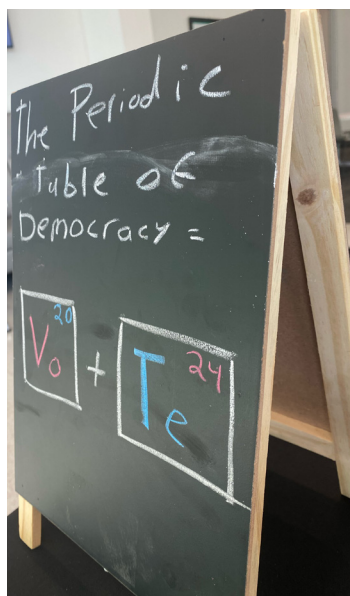
In addition, we have made our campus community aware of our efforts through faculty and student newsletters and our ever-increasing voter registration promotional efforts.



Fall 2024 Voter Friendly Campus tabling event in the Memorial Student Center - Student Voter Friendly Campus Staff Member Kaylee Criner provided information about registering to vote and Constitution Month events.



Oct. 8, 2024, Candidate Forum Student Moderator Quinlin Sollars with League of Women Voters of the Huntington Area Co-President & Candidate Forum Moderator Martha Woodward.



Sept. 16, 2024, National Voter Registration Day - Student Voter Friendly Campus Staff Members Michael Borsuk and Blayne Pinnell.



Sept. 17, 2025, Constitution Day - Dr. Montserrat Müller and Dr. Jennifer Robinette kick off Constitutional Jeopardy.



2025 Constitutional Jeopardy Winning Team - Caleb Ferguson, Sydney Barbour, Reagan Clagg, Ashton Pack, Bailey Dore, and Lacie Brenner.

2025 CONSTITUTION CELEBRATION

Thursday, August 28th

Amicus Curiae Lecture Series on Constitutional Democracy
“Progress is Not Inevitable: Gender Dynamics in Today’s Politics”

7:00 p.m., Brad D. Smith Foundation Hall

For more information, visit www.marshall.edu/spc

Wednesday & Thursday, September 3rd, 4th, 10th and 11th

Open Quilts Tournament

4:00 p.m., Buskirk Field

Students, faculty, staff, and alumni encouraged to play

Tuesday, September 16th

National Voter Registration Day

10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m., Memorial Student Center Plaza

Wednesday, September 17th

Constitutional Jeopardy!

4:00 p.m., Drinko Library Atrium

All students invited to compete

Tuesday, September 23rd

Court on Campus

Supreme Court of Appeals of West Virginia

Oral Arguments Session

10:00 a.m., Joan C. Edwards Playhouse

Tickets available at tinyurl.com/court-on-campus

Thursday, September 25th

Amicus Curiae Lecture Series on Constitutional Democracy

“Shall Not be Denied or Abridged: The Right to Vote in America”

7:00 p.m., Brad D. Smith Foundation Hall

For more information, visit www.marshall.edu/spc

Tuesday, September 30th

Dan O’Hanlon Essay Competition Awards Ceremony

5:00 p.m., Simon Perry Center for Constitutional Democracy, Old Main 314

For more information, visit www.marshall.edu/spc



For more information, call 304-696-3183 or email drinko@marshall.edu



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