



# All In Democracy Challenge Action Plan

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## I. INTRODUCTION

### a. University

The University of Maryland is a public research university located in College Park, Maryland. Founded in 1856, it serves as the flagship campus of the University System of Maryland and is the state's original land-grant institution, serving approximately 38,000 undergraduate and graduate students. In keeping with its mission, the University recognizes the importance of educating all undergraduate and graduate students to engage, interact, and work effectively in an increasingly diverse world.

### b. NSLVE Data 2012 Election

According to the Tufts University National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) report, which measured voter registration and participation rates at over 750 colleges nationwide, 78.8% of students at the University of Maryland were registered to vote in the 2012 presidential election; in total, 54.2% of students voted on Election Day. While this percentage represents a significant portion of the student body and is higher than the national average for public research institutions, the University of Maryland recognizes that innovation and advocacy are necessary to inspire social change and seeks to improve both registration and participation rates in this year's presidential election.

### c. Campus Climate

Our university Campus Assessment Working Group conducted a survey of freshman students' attitudes during the 2012 president election. This provides insights into our campus climate that aide in our efforts to create an effective action plan.

Of the 3,490 full-time freshman 42% responded to the “Beginning Student Survey,” an annual survey. This year a series of questions were asked about the 2012 presidential election. Some key results are as follows:

- 81% watched political debates
- More than 60% reported discussing election in one or more courses
- 70% reported engaging in political discussions often or sometimes in residence halls
- 64% reported sometimes or often discussing in classes
- 59% use social media as a source for election news one or more times a day
- 26% registered to vote through campus effort
- 66% reported interest in the election.

CAWG will release in October results of a survey conducted during the Spring 2016 semester during which 3,268 juniors and seniors were surveyed on “perceptions of voting.” Some key results...

- 90% reported being very or somewhat interested in federal elections
- 79% watched political debates
- 59% use social media one or more times a day as source for election news
- 27% use national television news one or more times a day for election news
- 73% watch political satire television shows daily or one/ore times a week
- 43% reported their political views have changed since enrolling in college.

d. Development of Committee/Coalition

Upon accepting the All In Democracy Challenge the Student Government Association president, Ms. Katherine Swanson, and Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs, John Zacker agreed to co-chair a steering committee comprised of faculty, staff, and students. The following members serve on this committee:

- Kelley Bishop, Staff, University Career Center (staff)
- Sue Briggs, Behavioral and Social Sciences (faculty)
- Steve Chen, Residence Halls Association (student)
- Stephanie Cork, Graduate Student Association (student)
- Corin Gioia Edwards, Fraternity and Sorority Life (staff)
- Sharon La Voy, Institutional Research, Planning & Assessment (staff)
- Eric Luedtke, University Studies (faculty)
- James McShay, Stamp Union Center for Campus Life (staff)
- Irwin Morris, Government and Politics (faculty)
- Benjamin Parks, College Park Scholars (faculty)
- Britney Sagastizado, United Greek Council (student)
- Sue Sherburne, Intercollegiate Athletics (staff)
- Deborah Slosberg, Leadership and Community Service-Learning (staff)
- Katherine Swanson, Student Government Association (student)
- Laura Tan, Department of Resident Life (staff)
- Ashley Venneman, Student Organization Resource Center (staff)
- John Zacker, Office of Vice President for Student Affairs (staff).

## II. VOTER REGISTRATION and PARTICIPATION

- a. SGA contracted with TurboVote to establish a UMD specific voter registration site that will provide key data
  - i. All-student email from SGA president sent in mid-August announcing the adoption of TurboVote
- b. Creation of TerpsVote Coalition comprised of various student organizations SGA, College Dems and Republicans, Students for Liberty, Terps for Trump, Terps for Hilary, IFC & PHA, MaryPrig, RHA, Black Honors, PRIDE, Graduate Student Government is promoting Turbo Vote registering over 2000 students
  - i. TerpsVote Coalition creating and posting a “frequently asked questions” to respond to voter questions and obtain resources
  - ii. MaryPIRG and SGA are hosting an All In Democracy Challenge table at the First Look Fair
  - iii. La Plata Beach Terps Vote Rally September 9th at 5-7
  - iv. Panhellenic Association will conduct a voter drive
  - v. AOPi Voter Registration Drive on September 25<sup>th</sup>
  - vi. National Voter Registration Day- MaryPIRG mini –blitz on September 27 and again October 11, 12, 13
- c. Voter registration drive will occur through the Office of Leadership and Community Service Learning through October 13
- d. Facilitating Student Voting Efforts
  - i. BSOS is doing a Debate Watch Party in the Stamp
  - ii. Debate viewing party hosted by College Rep. at 7:00pm September 26<sup>th</sup>
  - iii. SGA created a Get Out the Vote Video that will run on October 4<sup>th</sup>
  - iv. College Reps Debate Viewing Party on October 11<sup>th</sup>
  - v. The Collation will be hosting a Debate Watch Party in the Hoff
  - vi. SGA is working on Early Voting Shuttles to College Park Community Center
- e. The University of Maryland hosts **two polling sites on campus** in conjunction with the Prince George’s County Board of Elections: Stamp Student Union and Ritchie Coliseum.
- f. **Early voting** in the state of Maryland runs from Thursday, October 27 through Thursday, November 3, from 8:00am to 8:00pm. The College Park Community Center (5051 Pierce Avenue) is an official early voting location in Prince George’s County, and it is located near campus. Source: [http://www.elections.state.md.us/voting/early\\_voting.html](http://www.elections.state.md.us/voting/early_voting.html). **Student Government Association (SGA) is working with the Department of Transportation Services (DOTS) to sponsor a bus for students to vote early to help alleviate congestion on Election Day, Tuesday, November 8.**
- g. The Department of Resident Life is working in conjunction with the Residence Hall Association (RHA) to support distribution of messages to residential students explaining the voter registration process. Department of Resident Life will use the "Register to Vote" banner graphic created by the Student Government Association and place posters in the

lobby of each high rise residence hall and the lobby of each residence hall service center. These posters will encourage students to register to vote, as well as to vote on election day.

### III. VOTER EDUCATION

- a. **Democracy Then & Now** is a campus-wide initiative exploring the central role of public education in the development of American democracy. DTN asks students, faculty and staff to consider what good public education means now in terms of civic participation, political representation, and full citizenship rights for all people in this country. DTN traces the shifting educational fortunes of various subjects within the American polity—the white elite, the poor, women, people of color, Native Americans, LGBTQIA, immigrants—through the optic of the inclusions and exclusions of our own university over its history. There is a powerful series of events scheduled as part of the DTN project: <http://dtn.umd.edu/>.

The **Worldwise: Arts and Humanities Dean's Lecture Series** in partnership with **Democracy Then and Now: Citizenship and Public Education** is bringing the poet Claudia Rankine to campus as part of a two-day event, Sept. 29 and 30. Claudia Rankine is the author of *Citizen: An American Lyric*, and was recently awarded a MacArthur "genius grant" (2016) for her work. Rankine has won the National Book Critics Circle Award for *Citizen*, as well as the Forward Prize for Poetry, the Los Angeles Times Book Award, the PEN Open Book Award, and the NAACP Image Award. She will be in Conversation with Sheri Parks at The Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center, Sept. 29, 5.30-7. For more information: <https://theclarice.umd.edu/events/2016/worldwise-arts-and-humanities-deans-lecture-series>.

Claudia Rankine will also hold an informal meeting with students (with Josh Weiner, Professor Department of English, University of Maryland), Friday 30 at 10-11:30am in the special events room in McKeldin 6137. To attend this event, please contact Professor Kim Coles directly at [kcoles@umd.edu](mailto:kcoles@umd.edu).

- b. **First-Year Book Program** this year centers on Bryan Stevenson's "Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption," with myriad connections to citizenship. Stevenson will give a lecture on Tuesday, November 1, at 4:00pm in the Colony Ballroom of Stamp Student Union. For more: <http://wp.fyb.umd.edu/fyb/>.
- c. **The Residence Hall Association and the Department of Resident Life** have themed the 2016 Leadership Training Day around democracy and civic engagement. This training session prioritized teaching skills that student leaders will need in order to engage their peers in the upcoming election and larger civic responsibilities throughout the school year. Among those featured at Leadership Training Day were a lecture on inclusive language by Nicole Mehta from the Common Ground Multicultural Dialogue Program, a presentation on civic-related programming by Sara Carter from the Maryland PIRG, and an interactive social media challenge entitled Civic Engagement in Action.
- d. **The "Voices of Social Change"** program of Leadership and Community Service Learning in the Stamp Student Union will be hosting Marc Lamont Hill on Wednesday, November 2. An activist, social critic, and one of the nation's most notable African American leaders, Dr. Marc Lamont Hill is among a new generation of public intellectuals who move with equal

ease between Faculty Row and Fraternity Row, "the street" and Main Street. Whether he's offering insights into controversial issues like the political landscape of the 2016 election, war on education, or sensitive ones like race in a post-Obama America, Hill offers a fresh, informed, thought-provoking perspective that never fails to challenge and engage.

- e. **Beyond the Classroom** living-learning program has adopted a theme tied to the election: "Voting as If the 'Real Issues' Matter: Spotlight on the 2016 Elections," which includes films, speakers and discussions. BTC is also partnering with The Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center to have students participate in "The Portal Project" to connect students to other students worldwide to discuss the election. For more: <http://www.beyondtheclassroom.umd.edu/>.
- f. **College Park Scholars** living-learning program has adopted a theme of "Power" for 2016-17. Programming includes "Power Talks" (lectures, conversations and conferences) such as a panel entitled, "Do Facts Matter? Citizenship in an Era of Truthiness", and "Power Moves" like debate watches and discussions. For more: <http://scholars.umd.edu/>.
- g. **The Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center** is bringing Baseem Yousseff to campus for a two-night event, "The Political Power of Laughter." Described as "the Jon Stewart of Egypt," Yousseff will come to campus on September 20-21 to discuss democracy and how comedy can be a force for change. For more: <https://theclarice.umd.edu/events/2016/basem-youssef>.
- h. **Do Good Campus: Transforming Idealism into Impact** is building on an initiative that arose out of the School for Public Policy, Center for Philanthropy and Nonprofit Leadership, and seeks to extend across the campus. "From orientation to graduation, we will engage the entire student body in initiatives designed to ensure that every student who graduates from UMD will do so informed and motivated to Do Good in their communities and around the world. For more: <http://umd.edu/dogood/>.

#### IV. CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

In accordance with the University of Maryland's participation in the *All In Democracy Challenge* a Campus Coalition will work to define the University's mission and desired student learning outcomes in the area of civic engagement. The scope of the project will include both undergraduate and graduate students as well as both curricular and co-curricular experiences.

The University of Maryland provides a rich array of learning experiences around civic engagement and leadership. However, without clearly defined expectations and a mission that assembles them into a coherent whole, our students may not graduate with a sense of empowerment as civically engaged leaders in their careers and community lives.

We recognize that students come to college to prepare for lives of personal satisfaction and rewarding careers. They also seek to address society's problems by engaging in community based research, social values work, contributing to a culture of entrepreneurial good and a commitment to community service and philanthropy. As one of the nation's top public research universities, the flagship of the University System of Maryland, and a land-grant institution, the University of Maryland must educate students that they can both do good and do well, each in

his or her own unique ways. It is the Universities fundamental and compelling responsibility to prepare students for lives of wholeness and integrity. We must prepare students in all majors and career paths to be civically engaged citizens, scholars, and leaders.

The many current examples of corporate fraud have embittered the American public and led to the demand for universities to educate students for moral and ethical, in addition to civic, responsibility and leadership. “A fully developed individual must have the ability to think clearly and in an appropriately complex and sophisticated way about moral and civic issues; he or she must possess the moral commitment and sense of personal responsibility to act, which may include having moral emotions such as empathy and concern for others; moral and civic values, interests, and habits; and knowledge and experience in the relevant domains of life” (Colby et al, 2003, pp. 17-18).

The current turbulent times marked by the 2008 great depression, global unrest, cultural discontent and environmental havoc have made it painfully clear to our students that the United States is inextricably part of a globally interdependent world that they must learn the skills to engage both locally and globally. As the University’s international presence grows and the numbers of our students studying abroad as well as those coming to our campus from other nation’s increase, the need to prepare students to be global citizens and leaders with vision, courage, and compassion also increases. We must empower students to think critically about national and global social systems and to discover their roles in making our social institutions more equitable and more effective.

The University of Maryland already excels in providing a rich array of educational experiences that address these areas. However, we must become more intentional about defining our desired learning outcomes in order for our students to understand the compelling nature and high level of our expectations of them—to become intentional learners. We must also establish a mission that assembles these outcomes into a coherent whole so that our students graduate with a sense of empowerment as civically engaged citizens, scholars, and leaders.

The Democracy Challenge Coalition will work to design a Civic Engagement Plan building on the work of a task force report issued in 2004 to advance and guide the university in creating a model to advance civically engaged leadership while creating further opportunities for students to learn about and practice civic engagement and leadership. Suggested actions:

- a. Identify existing campus civic engagement initiatives and determine a larger campus collaborative to build on existing efforts – Do Good Campus, Democracy Then and Now, Campus Compact, Campus Fabric, among others to be determined
- b. Establish campus-wide civic engagement coalition and ongoing steering committee to oversee efforts building on Democracy Challenge
- c. Establish a campus-side civic engagement vision and mission
- d. Identify existing civic engagement efforts on the campus and develop methods for promoting to students
- e. Evaluate the development of learning outcomes to be used with civic engagement strategies.

## **V. ASSESSMENT**

- a. The Democracy Challenge steering committee will evaluate data from the NSLVE to determine the degree we have been successful in achieving the goals of increasing the number of students registering to vote and the student voter turnout.
- b. Data reported through TurboVoteUMD will be analyzed to assess voter registration efforts.