



MIDDLE TENNESSEE

STATE UNIVERSITY

Register to Vote!

I AM *true*
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MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

Middle Tennessee State University Campus Vote Plan Review Civic Action Plan Review

2018

Overview

Through the Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU) office of the American Democracy Project for Civic Learning (ADP) since 2005, MTSU has been proactive in developing, facilitating, and increasing student civic engagement and student voter participation. Over the years our tools have changed, our strategies have matured, and our hard work has yielded varying results. Through our being part of the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) since 2014, we've been able to more closely track our successes and challenges. We continually renew and reinvigorate our commitment and campus action planning, thanks to student energy, ever expanding across-campus involvement, administrative determination, important partners in county and state government, valued friends in our strong community organizations, and the resources and guidance of our national partners who provide for us a wider community and vision and who cheer on our efforts and achievements.

Here's how we implemented and adjusted our 2018 plan during the fall 2018 semester and election season.

Voter Registration

Voter Registration was the First Big Push. In Tennessee, voter registration for us ended Tuesday, October 9, 2018, for the November 6 election. We worked on registration throughout spring and summer 2018, and we pushed our campus every day through October 9.

Voter information in 2018 CUSTOMS folders. As we do every year, a big splash with dates, details, instructions, links, and full information on voter registration, fall elections, voting, and absentee balloting was published this past spring in the 2018 New Student Handbook for new-student orientation, which we at MTSU call CUSTOMS. All incoming freshman and transfer students received the handbook when they came to campus to register for fall classes. CUSTOMS began in May 2018 and ran through July, preceding student move-in and the start of school on August 27, 2018.

Online registration for voters in Tennessee. The CUSTOMS sheet of instructions of voter information looked different in 2018 than it did when we designed and printed registration instructions in 2017 and the years prior. In September of 2017, Tennessee's Secretary of State shifted Tennessee to an online voter registration system, which anyone can utilize if s/he has a Tennessee driver's license. We began to learn about, experiment with, and incorporate the online capability during academic year (AY) 17-18. Our improving mastery of online registration AY17-18 allowed us to embrace it and to share it widely with our students during fall 2018, and now going forward: <https://ovr.govote.tn.gov/>.

Helpful online voter registration web portals. MTSU is loaded with online sources of voter information – beyond the national and state portals – for our specific community, campus, and student use. Our students were directed to these portals through numerous directives, media, postings, and processes during their time at MTSU: <http://www.mtsu.edu/amerdem/register-to-vote.php>, <http://www.mtsu.edu/stuaff/vote.php>, <http://election.rutherfordcountyttn.gov/students.htm>.

On-campus registration tables throughout summer 2018 CUSTOMS. Our local county election commission officials from the Rutherford County Election Commission (RCEC) came to campus spring and summer 2018 and set up tables in the MTSU Student Union during all ten of our new-student, two-day CUSTOMS registration and orientation events held on campus for our new, incoming students. RCEC registered as many students as possible throughout the summer, as an integral component of the university's new **True Blue Voter** initiative, which was developed by the MTSU Board of Trust chairman, Mr. Steve Smith; MTSU Vice President, Professor Andrew Oppmann; and Rutherford County Election Commission Administrator, Mr. Alan Farley: <http://www.mtsu.edu/truebluevoter/>. Student voter registration took place on these CUSTOMS dates throughout summer 2018: May 17-18, May 22-23, May 30-31; June 5-6, June 13-14, June 22-23, June 27-28; July 10-11, July 18-19, July 26-27.

Online student voter registration as part of course registration. For our returning students – the bulk of the MTSU student body – a button inviting our students to register to vote was placed before they exited course registration for classes for fall 2018 (for *half* of our student body). The software, button, and linkage to course registration was accomplished between October 2017 and March 2018, to be in place for fall course registration that began April 2018. MTSU responded to a call by the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) in Oct. 2017 to sign up to be part of a new nationwide study by Indiana, Temple, Princeton, and Brigham Young Universities called the **Registration Enrollment Study** (RES), which seeks to compare rates of student voter registration if a voter registration portal is embedded in universities' course enrollment process. Because Tennessee now has online voter registration and because of the proactive advocacy of MTSU's Provost, Dr. Mark Byrnes, MTSU joined the study in 2017—and as it has turned out, we were the only university in the nation that was actually able to create and emplace the software in under six months in time for spring 2018 course registration. A caveat of course is that this program is indeed a study: meaning, only 50% of our registering students got the voter registration link, and 50% did not. But we are pleased to have advanced the study, developed the software, offered this opportunity to our students, and now to have

the capability, going forward, to be able to provide the voter registration link to 100% of MTSU students registering for their classes in future semesters.

Register to Vote!

Our brand new Register to Vote! button for voter registration. A sweet byproduct of the software work carried out by the MTSU Information Technology Division (ITD) to create the voter registration portal embedded in student course enrollment was that the university then had a new online “button” tool that we were free to place anywhere online that would be equitably accessible to all MTSU students. (We clearly will not jeopardize the RES, but our registration efforts continued to be ubiquitous all over campus, and we received RES permission to apply the button as universally as we chose, without targeting any specific subset of students.) Therefore, most offices, departments, colleges, centers, and programs added the Register to Vote button to their homepages, to catch the eyes of as many students as we possibly could (<https://www.mtsu.edu/amerdem/register-to-vote.php>). What was—and continues to be—great about the new button was that in setting it up, we created a series of yes/no clicks to direct students to specific questions and processes that fit their specific, individual needs. We had developed a series of questions—ones relevant specifically to our student body—over many years of student voter registration on campus. We simply coded those questions, which guided students through a successful voter registration process for their particular situation, to fit their own unique living/driving/commuting/ residential circumstance.

The button/link was placed on numerous MTSU department/college/program pages fall 2018 voter registration. Here are just a few examples of where it was posted:

<http://www.mtsu.edu/provost/index.php>

<https://www.mtsu.edu/cbas/>

<https://www.mtsu.edu/business/>

<https://www.mtsu.edu/education/>

<http://www.mtsu.edu/honors/index.php>

<http://mtsu.edu/seigenthaler/index.php>

<http://www.mtsu.edu/involve/index.php>

<http://www.mtsu.edu/mtengage/index.php>

<https://www.mtsu.edu/education/cem.php>

<http://www.mtsu.edu/history/>

<https://www.mtsu.edu/accounting/>

<https://www.mtsu.edu/econfin/index.php>

<https://www.mtsu.edu/management/>

<https://www.mtsu.edu/marketing/>

<http://www.mtsu.edu/sos/index.php>

<http://mtsu.edu/cala/>

Post the button more, even more widely, across campus. The American Democracy Project staff continued to contact departments, even after the Oct. 9 registration deadline, that had not previously posted the button, to achieve as pervasive posting and dissemination of it as possible. Most of the departments that posted the button during voter registration before the mid-term elections continue to keep it on their webpages for students to access anytime, and we continue to increase the number of departments/colleges/programs/centers/institutes with the button emplaced.

On-campus voter registration tabling events this past fall, before Oct. 9, 2018. Classes started at MTSU August 27, 2018. We had just six weeks before the Oct. 9 deadline, to register and re-register as many of our MTSU students as we could get to, talk to, help, share information with, update, re-inform, reinvigorate, and energize. Here is a list of the voter registration tabling efforts we executed this past fall:

Mon., Aug. 27, First Day of Fall Semester – American Association of University Women (AAUW) hosted voter registration table on Honors College lawn

Wed., Sept. 12 – Debate Club hosted a voter reg. table on Honors College lawn

Mon., Sept. 17, Constitution Day – Six Constitution readings across campus: individuals with voter reg. forms and iPads for online registration were at each site; AAUW hosted all-day voter reg. table at Honors College; Rutherford County Election Commission at College of Liberal Arts and College of Behavioral and Health Sciences

Tues., Sept. 18-Thurs., Sept. 20, Constitution Week – Voter reg. tabling at Walker Library, Albert Gore Research Center, American Democracy Project office, Center for Educational Media, and the John Seigenthaler Chair in the Bragg Media building; these sites remained opened through October 9; the Murfreesboro League of Women Voters (LWV) hosted a table on Honors lawn two of the four days of Constitution Week events

Fri., Sept. 21, MTSU Student Government Association (SGA), MTSU Debate Team, and TN Secretary of State's Office – The groups coordinated efforts with RCEC and hosted a table on Honors lawn to close out our Constitution Week celebration

Tues., Sept. 25, Nat'l Voter Reg. Day (NVRD) – MTSU SGA and ADP hosted reg. tables at Honors lawn, Peck Hall, James Union Building, McCallie Dining Hall; the Kappa Alpha Psi fraternity hosted a table at their regular meeting; in addition to registering students, ADP was working proactively to register campus staff, food-service employees, and contract personnel

Wed., Sept. 26, Delta Sigma Theta and NAACP – Both organizations hosted a table at the Student Union Building

Thurs., Sept. 27, AAUW – AAUW hosted a table all day on Honors lawn

Mon., Oct 1-Fri., Oct 5 and Mon., Oct 8, LWV, SGA, ADP, über-volunteer (former faculty member) Steve Daugherty – Tables and individuals with forms and iPads for online registration were hosted across campus; voter reg. tables were located in the Honors lawn on east campus and outside Peck Hall on west campus; we registered students and Aramark staff in the campus cafeterias; individuals walked across and throughout campus to register voters

Tues., Oct. 9, Last Day of Voter Reg. in TN – AAUW hosted the voter registration table on the Honors lawn and SGA hosted a final table across campus near Peck Hall, until the last light of the day waned, closing up after dark

The objective was to have a voter registration table somewhere on campus every day from Aug. 27 through Oct. 9, 2018, which we made happen through establishing multiple permanent voting sites on campus. Our additional tabling at the Student Union, Honors Lawn, near Peck Hall, in the on-campus dormitories, in the cafeterias, along with our tactic of having individuals canvass throughout campus allowed us to give an extra push, spread awareness, promote an engaged culture, and answer questions for the student body.

Our voter registration organization would not have been possible without the work of Monica Haun, ADP president for the fall 2018 semester, who participated in the CivicTN voting summit spring 2018 at the Howard Baker Center for Public Policy at University of Tennessee Knoxville. The CivicTN student coalition conference prepared student leaders for the fall work ahead. The content of the conference helped structure and motivate our student leadership to carry out campus student voter engagement. Monica rallied fraternities, clubs, and SGA to help with registration and promoted the importance of voting within multiple campus student groups. During summer 2018, Monica applied for support from Campus Election Engagement Project (CEEP), which she was awarded. She became MTSU's first CEEP Fellow, which assisted in underwriting all her unflagging voter registration, voter education, and voter turnout efforts all fall.

National Voter Registration Day with the Tennessee Secretary of State's office. The Tennessee Secretary of State, Secretary Tre Hargett, or his staff have come to MTSU every year since 2014 for Constitution Day or National Voter Registration Day. This fall was no exception. The Rutherford

County Election Commission joined him for a day of outdoor tabling at MTSU with our Student Affairs officials and the Student Government Association. MTSU President Dr. Sidney A McPhee and Honors College Dean Dr. John R. Vile welcomed Secretary Hargett to campus.

Invade Connection Point activities and set up at events already happening. Our University Provost sent a team of MTSU students and faculty, April 2018, to the statewide CivicTN summit for higher education, which was the inaugural meeting of the newly formed the Tennessee Civic Campus Coalition. At the summit, voting facilitators and students shared best practices. One of the tips our students came away with and brought home from that weekend was the idea to go to events already existing, to not reinvent the wheel, but rather to invade activities already planned and maximize their fun and attendance to carry out voter registration. That principle motivated the “invade Connection Point” plan. Connection Point (CP) events are sponsored by Student Affairs, students are encouraged to attend, and students are awarded Connection Point participation buttons to put on their backpacks for taking part in these great CP events (<http://www.mtsu.edu/buttons/>).

Connection Point activities--programs hosted by or supported by Student Affairs--happened all fall semester. Examples of some events we considered for voter registration and voter information included football tailgate parties, the Department Fair, the Volunteer Fair, the Student Organization Fair, and various others. We hosted a table at the Student Organization Fair, and planned to host a table at a film screening of the documentary *RBG* and its discussion on campus. That event had to be rescheduled due to a weather conflict for our guest speaker (the *RBG* producer) who was unable to attend at the last minute. (The event was rescheduled for March 2019; we will host a voter registration table there this spring.) Our most successful Connection Point and registration event was Constitution Day. We hosted tables on campus, and individuals in “Register to Vote” sandwich board signs helped students register throughout campus. In upcoming years, we will be even more comprehensive in our attendance at CD events; we have learned how to plan ahead for attending them, working with more and more student organizations to run the tables, furthering our goals for upcoming AY19-20.

Emails, memos, and top-down encouragement and directives. We know about the limited effectiveness of emails, nevertheless we used all the tools at hand. American Democracy Project sent repetitive, systematic email reminders, to students, faculty, and staff. The office of the University Provost sent emailed reminders for us. The office of Marketing and Communications sent reminder emails for us. All quarters of our campus received instructions and reminders about candidate events, voter registration, Early Voting, and Election Day throughout the fall.

Making time in every class for voter registration. Among the emails sent by the University Provost were requests of all faculty that every professor take 10-15 minutes in each of his/her classes at the beginning of the semester to have students check their voter registration (<https://tnmap.tn.gov/voterlookup/>) and to register or re-register now that they were moved back to our county (<https://www.mtsu.edu/amerdem/register-to-vote.php>). We reiterated this objective and requested in-class participation at every opportunity. We met with the AY18-19 president of the Faculty Senate during summer 2018 to ask for her support and the encouragement of the Faculty Senate in this objective as well.

Permanent voter registration offices located geographically all across our campus. We had multiple permanent on-campus registration sites situated in many spots on campus with on-site personnel helping students with voter registration anytime they walked in. There was signage to catch students’ attention to direct them to these spots every single day--when university offices were open and school was in session. With online registration, with options to just click to register, we of course still needed physical locations where students could go get personal one-on-one help and have their questions answered.

TurboVote portal became available. MTSU's Center for Student Involvement and Leadership (CSIL) added TurboVote to our Student Affairs MyMT activity portal. MyMT is our university's platform through Campus Labs, which has a new Voter Engagement Extension. After Student Affairs' inclusion of TurboVote, ADP added a TurboVote page to MTSU's online registration sequence, so we can capture how many of our students indeed register online. That addition was not inserted until Sept. 17, 2018: students, faculty, and staff were registering online since 2017, but starting 9/17/18, we can now keep track of how many register via the MTSU online portal.

Nothing but room for improvement. We know from our NSLVE data that 72.3% of our students were registered in 2016 (https://www.mtsu.edu/amerdem/docs/NSLVEReport2012_2016MTSU.pdf), and in 2014, 61.4% of our students were registered in the last interim election year (https://www.mtsu.edu/amerdem/docs/NSLVEReport2012_2014MTSU.pdf). We tried proactively to exceed both of these percentages in 2018. We await our NSLVE data, probably in summer 2019, to learn of our successes and challenges.

University employees and contract/service staff also wanted help registering. New this year, the university service staff reached out to us to help them get registered to vote. We went to two dining services meetings, one before the semester began and one on September 25, to answer questions and register campus workers to vote.

Registration success for MTSU: state recognition. The Tennessee Secretary of State ran a higher ed registration friendly competition this fall, during September, voter registration month. MTSU registered more voters than any other campus in state; we found out from CivicTN, from the Secretary of State's data. We recorded 070 registrations, but due to very incomplete number capture, we realize that number is a significant undercount.

Voter Education

Educating Student Voters goes on All Fall.

Gubernatorial forum was our Constitution Day program this year. The Tennessee League of Women Voters (LWV) and the Nashville/Knoxville/Memphis/Chattanooga Public Television stations' (NPT) gubernatorial forum – a debate between the two winners of the Aug. 2 Democratic and Republican primaries for Tennessee Governor – was to be held at MTSU on Thursday evening, Sept. 20, 2018. Although the state governor's race was not the only election in November, it was an important one. Our students would have been able to hear both candidates in person on our campus. We had a portal open asking our students to submit questions to the candidates (<http://www.mtsu.edu/2018forum/>), for faculty to work with students to engage their submission of questions for the candidates, and for faculty to include the forum as a course requirement in their syllabi. Unfortunately, after the primary results came in, one of the two main cancelled. Our best alternative for getting out to students the platforms of each candidate was nonpartisan candidate guides. Campus Election Engagement Project supplied us statewide guides. We added citations, developed guides for other elections' candidates, and made all available to students.

Gubernatorial candidate luncheon off campus. In lieu of the LWV forum, both of the two main parties' gubernatorial candidates agreed to a luncheon in Murfreesboro on Sept. 20 at which MTSU students could ask them questions. Students did attend and prepared their questions for the candidates. But, most unfortunately, one of the candidates also did not show up for the luncheon. Students learned a lot about the hard-knocks realities of politics through this fall's state campaigns.

Senate candidate forum **watch party** on campus. The two main candidates for U.S. Senate debated

the evening of Tuesday, Sept. 25 -- National Voter Registration Day. The (also a LWV) forum was held at another Tenn. university, Cumberland University in Lebanon, which was streamed live on Public Television. We set up a watch party at MTSU, with discussants and discussion.

Candidates for Congress from the Fourth Congressional District. Through our relationship with LWV, MTSU attempted to host multiple debates. Very sadly, in no instance could we get both parties to agree, and we therefore did not hold one this fall.

Candidates on campus from both major political parties. Both the MTSU College Democrats and MTSU College Republicans planned to bring their candidates to campus this fall, under the auspices of the Rutherford County Democratic and Republican parties and the state parties. Our College Dems and Repubs varied in success. Both of their organizations were involved in various voter registration and Election Day activities during the 2018 calendar year. Some events included interest meetings, College Republicans v. College Democrats policy debate, the fourth annual “Can the police do that?” seminar hosted by both organizations and by the Young Americans for Liberty (YAL, campus Libertarians). Some examples of partisan activities on campus included State of the Union watch parties, tailgates, phone banking, informational debates, hosting Town Hall meetings, attending rallies, and hosting election night panels.

Candidate information provided on ADP website. Reputable candidate-assessment websites were posted on the American Democracy Project public access portals. We posted the Campus Election Engagement Project’s nonpartisan voting guides on the website, and explained the Rutherford County ballot for MTSU’s Congressional district and Tennessee State House and Senate district campaigns.

Candidate information provided before the election. We used the same Campus Election Engagement Project (CEEP) nonpartisan guides to pass out on campus. ADP’s über-volunteer Steve Daugherty printed enormous vinyl posters of the candidate guides and placed them on the Honors lawn on the weeks leading up to the election. We also passed out paper copies of the guides and had stacks near the posters for students to take as needed.

Polling places mapped and disseminated. When hosting voter registration tables, we passed out information sheets with Early Voting locations and Election Day locations. Once Early Voting ended, we directed students to the nearest polling station on November 6. We hosted a #VoteTogether party at the polling location closest to campus, Central Magnet School. We provided rides to the polls to students on campus and supported student walks from campus to the nearest polling station. Three MTSU student organizations, MTSU’s NAACP, SGA, and School of Journalism and Strategic Media, each led students and participated in a walk to the polls every hour of the MTSU Election Day #VoteTogether party at Central Magnet.

Absentee balloting information provided widely. The dates for applying for absentee ballots and the processes for applying were repeatedly offered and supported by the voting assistance team throughout the fall, <https://sos.tn.gov/products/elections/how-do-i-request-absentee-ballot>. ADP worked to paid for postage for students needing to mail in absentee applications and then absentee ballots.

Sample ballots provided on ADP website. American Democracy Project posted all the links necessary for our students to have ready access to preparatory materials they needed to prepare to vote. This information was regularly supplied to faculty through Academic Affairs emails, in order for faculty to assist students inside their classrooms.

Calendars also provided by ADP. The dates by which all the getting-ready-to-vote events needed to be accomplished were repeatedly disseminated to students throughout the fall semester: dates to apply for absentee ballots, the deadline to register, the start of Early Voting, the times of open polls.

Hustle texting platform for MTSU. Thanks to our partnership with CivicTN, the Proud Voter program offered to purchase for our student team a Hustle platform so that our student voting leaders could text-communicate to MTSU students, because we know students respond more to texts than they do to emails. We opted to use the program on November 5 to get the last reminder out for students to vote on Election Day and we reached all of the individuals, over 700, in our database. This platform allowed students to ask questions about polling locations, voter I.D. laws, links to sample ballots, and directed students to nonpartisan candidate information.

Constitution Day 2018 came up so fast this past fall. MTSU does a bang-up Constitution Day every year (<https://www.mtsu.edu/amerdem/const-day-archive.php>). We read the U.S. Constitution at every college across our campus, which we continued again this year: it's an MTSU tradition. Personally interacting with the Constitution is a baseline form of citizenship education in which we engage and advance for all our students. We had individuals wearing "Register to Vote" sandwich boards with the materials needed to register students to vote all across campus and had staff at each of the six Constitution reading locations.



RBG documentary film showing and panel discussion. Hosted by the College of Media and Entertainment, Department of Recording Industry, in KUC Theater on Sept. 13 at 2:30 p.m., the RBG documentary and panel discussion were intended to be a time to talk about the impact of the U.S. Senate race on the character and quality of the U.S. Supreme Court, and about average Americans' voting role in shaping the composition of SCOTUS. Unfortunately Hurricane Florence hit the East Coast and shut down the eastern airports so our guest speaker/discussant (the producer of the documentary) was not able to make the trip at the last minute. The university has rescheduled the event for March 11, 2019.

Governance lecture series all fall. MTSU University Honors College held a weekly lecture series on good governance, pursuit of true democracy, and what constitutes truth, with historic and community responses to the questions of the Constitution and justice. These lectures were an incredibly successful interdisciplinary series that promoted student engagement in larger issues of civics and the meaning of leadership in the United States today. Some topics included history, social justice, healthcare, and music, all of which showcased the broad meanings in the term "governance." The high point of the series was an incredibly successful, important field trip to Montgomery, Alabama, where students went to the National Memorial for Peace and Justice (the newly-opened-in-2018 Equal Justice Initiative lynching memorial), and the Montgomery Legacy Museum (on the legacy of violence in our national history). In attending this event, students faced painful histories and considered how they continue to shaped present-day justice/injustice. Furthermore, the call to leadership that closed the visit to Montgomery, with a visit to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s Dexter Avenue Baptist Church, reminded students that as citizens it is everyone's duty to step up and demand that our local, state, and federal representatives promote ideals of equality and freedom for all citizens. Students gave excellent feedback about the trip and connected the academic lecture series themes and to the reality portrayed at the memorial/museum/church visits.

Get Out the Vote

Students Voting were Most Energized by Other Voting Students. The MTSU Student Government Association provided the leadership and energy for our campus' Get Out the Vote efforts. We pushed to get MTSU student voters to the polls from October 17 through November 1, 2018 (Tennessee's period of Early Voting), and on Election Day, November 6, 2018.

Early Voting in Tennessee. Began Wed., Oct. 17, and ran through Thurs., Nov. 1.

Election Day all across the country was Tuesday, Nov. 6.

Absentee ballot applications needed to be applied by mid-October. For students who wanted to vote at home by absentee ballot -- “by-mail ballot” -- applying for an absentee ballot for the Nov. 6 election began in summer 2018. We helped direct students to their county election commissions to learn more about local requirements for sending their respective absentee ballots, and preliminarily for sending their *applications* for an absentee ballot. We followed the philosophy that no time was too soon to email or call their local county election commission. Tennessee has 95 counties. Students needed to be in direct contact with their own specific election commission to request their by-mail ballot. We encouraged absentee voters to email their commission (<https://sos.tn.gov/products/elections/absentee-voting>) or call to inquire about process, re their absentee ballot, ASAP to make sure they indeed even *could* vote by mail. They needed to do this while they still had time to adjust their registration if need be. We communicated this messaging throughout the fall. All finalized absentee ballots had to be received by students’ home election commission offices by—no later than—Tuesday, Nov. 6. Therefore, realistically, the last date to mail in a ballot was c. Tuesday, Oct. 30. Therefore, realistically, to mail in an *application* and to receive the hard copy ballot back from their election commission, the last date to mail in an application was c. Oct. 15. These dates could be fudged somewhat, but the final ballot receipt deadline was firm—Nov. 6—and an application was required as a first step. Therefore, numerous details needed to be accomplished well in advance.

ADP, growing our base. This fall’s incoming student leadership team grew the American Democracy Project student group to have the widest possible student activist cohort and a bigger student leadership team. That work is ongoing, as student turnover is continuous.

Energizing the Political Science students. Voting is about all our students and must engage students in every major in every college, but Poli Sci students were asked especially to *carpe diem* and take leadership roles this fall. The students in the Political Science department are looking to further their political experience and involvement on campus, and this initiative gave them such opportunities. They were indeed more involved in taking on more responsibility with student voting this fall and integrating ADP work more proactively in the outreach and objectives of the Political Science department. We hope this motivation will grow in the future and we can plan more tabling efforts and larger events in collaboration with Poli Sci.

CEEP Fellow, the Campus Election Engagement Program. Our 2018 CEEP Fellow, Monica Haun, was a leader in all we did last year! Great job, Monica. She was a powerhouse throughout spring, summer, and fall of 2018. Monica graduated Dec. 2018, and we know that only great things lie ahead for her!

WAVE, Wake-up and Vote Early. MTSU has been involved with the WAVE, the Wake-up and Vote Early program in Tennessee since the 2012 election. Various groups on campus voted early, on the very first day of Early Voting, Wednesday, Oct. 17. Some classes/faculty drove students to the polls during class time 10/17/2018.

#VoteTogether party at the polls. On Election Day, Tuesday, Nov. 6, our ADP hosted an election party at Central Magnet School, the nearest-to-our-campus county polling location in Rutherford County. Central is right on East Main Street, it’s a neighbor of our university, it’s just a mile away, and it’s just up the street. MTSU earned grants for party funds from Civic Nation, through CivicTN’s Proud Voter project and through Students Learn Students Vote, the Young Invincibles. We offered free popcorn, granola bars and water to voters, students, and community members at the Central Magnet polling place on Election Day. Two community food trucks parked at the poll to serve food. We had music, a corn hole game, seating under tents, and activities for children. We also offered free rides from campus to the polling station for students—there and back—and we promoted

discounted Uber rides to students and community groups to get to the polls. We worked with MTSU Student Housing and placed door hangers on every single dormitory door on campus advertising the #VoteTogether party: we wanted big voting turnout by our on-campus student body! Also, leading up to Election Day, we canvassed the off-campus student apartments and the neighborhoods surrounding the polling station to inform them of the #VoteTogether event, answer questions, and encourage them to get out and vote. By including neighbors who live off campus, along with our apartment-dwelling off-campus student population, we promoted community involvement, trying proactively to bring everyone together. We wanted with this event to cultivate a culture in which voting is experienced as a celebration for all citizens, in which all citizens share, so that all citizens take joy in democratic engagement.

Students' Hustle texts. We offered TurboVote to all our students, to sign up for election reminders, and ProudVoterTN provided our student group a Hustle account to rally students, to allow them to text each other with reminders. We amassed over 700 contacts using Hustle and sent reminders to every single person in our database.

Election Day Convenience Voting, exclusive to Rutherford County. Located just outside of Nashville, with large international corporations nearby, the city/county in which our university is located is one of the top-ten fastest growing communities in the entire country (<https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2017/cb17-81-population-estimates-subcounty.html>). Our expanding population has positioned our county to reimagine voting options. The Tennessee General Assembly passed a law in 2016 that established for our county a special exception, a pilot project with a trial run in effect in 2018. "Convenience Voting" permitted any Rutherford County voter to vote in any Rutherford County polling location on Election Day, rather than having to go to his/her assigned precinct that day. The new Tennessee Convenience Voting program pertained exclusively to Rutherford County. The new options had several impacts, but for MTSU students, the primary impact was that our students could vote at various voting centers **closer to our campus** than previously. (We do not have on-campus voting.) Our student voters took advantage of the change on Election Day hopefully by increased voter turnout. For prior elections, our campus voting precinct location had previously been two miles away; driving was required. With Convenience Voting in 2018, many students walked to the polls.

Create buzz, create excitement, all student led! Our plan was to shake things up this fall, create excitement, create buzz, get students moving off their duffs and into action. Ground-up student action. Of the students, by the students, for the students. We await our NSLVE numbers to learn how successful we were. (We have not been informed about any exit polling in Tennessee, nor any in Rutherford County, that would provide us data in advance of NSLVE. Tennessee was not included in NextGen state data: <https://nextgenamerica.org/youth-voter-turnout/>.)

Student voter turnout. Whether the national youth-vote increase of 31%, which Tufts' Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning (CIRCLE) has estimated for the 2018 interim elections (<https://civicyouth.org/young-people-dramatically-increase-their-turnout-31-percent-shape-2018-midterm-elections/>), applies also to MTSU students, we are most anxious to learn from NSLVE in the months ahead.

Our Coalition

Support for Increased Student Voting through Max Buy-in. The organizational and departmental team members from across campus who engaged in advancing student engagement and student voter participation this fall, and in increasing our students' understanding of and commitment to the personal, direct, shared responsibilities in the American democratic process, represented all divisions, colleges, offices, and programs across campus:

SGA/Student Government Association
MTSU's CSIL/Center for Student Involvement and Leadership
American Democracy Project MTSU
Albert Gore Research Center
Center for Educational Media
MTSU Poll
Seigenthaler Chair of Excellence in First Amendment Studies
MTSU ITD/Information Technology Division
MTSU MAC/Marketing and Communications
MTSU University Honors College
MTSU College of Liberal Arts
MTSU Office of the University Provost
MTSU Board of Directors
The on-campus, hands-on team continued to expand through the fall.

Our Leadership

Key Students, Faculty, and Staff. The movers and shakers who carried the greatest leadership responsibilities in implementing our action plan included the following:

Monica Haun, SGA, ADP President, Campus Election Engagement Project (CEEP) Fellow
Delanie MacDonald, SGA Vice President
Samantha Eisenberg, SGA Attorney General
Sarah Williams, ADP Graduate Research Assistant
Dr. Mark Byrnes, University Provost
Assoc. Provost Faye Johnson, Office of the University Provost, Strategic Planning and Partnerships
Ms. Allison McGoffin, Assistant to the University Provost
Prof. Andrew Oppmann, Vice President for Marketing and Communications
Ms. Cathy Sgambati, Marketing and Communications, Public Relations
Director Jimmy Hart, News and Media Relations
Ms. Gina Fann, News and Media Relations
Ms. Gina Logue, News and Media Relations
Mr. Randy Weiler, News and Media Relations
Dr. Dan Kelley, Asst. VP for Student Affairs
Dr. Ken Blake, MTSU Poll
Prof. Deborah Fisher, Seigenthaler Chair
Dr. Lara Daniel, Jones College of Business, Co-chair of LWV
Dr. Louis Kyriakoudes, Director, Albert Gore Center
Ms. Donna Baker, University Archivist, Gore Center
Ms. Sarah Calise, Political/Regional Archivist, Gore Center
Prof. Kent Syler, Albert Gore Center
Dr. Laura Clark, Director, Center for Educational Media
Dr. John Vile, Dean, University Honors College
Dr. Philip Phillips, Assoc. Dean, University Honors College
Ms. Susan Lyons, Coordinator, University Honors College
Prof. Carole Swayze, Director, Experiential Learning
Dr. Michelle Boyer-Pennington, Psychology, Experiential Learning, General Education
Dr. Mary Evins, American Democracy Project for Civic Learning
Dr. Pippa Holloway, Faculty Senate President
The leadership team far exceeded these mentioned here. All of campus has been involved, from practically every quarter.

Our Community, Local, and Tennessee Partners

Civic Engagement Office, Office of the Tennessee Secretary of State

Rutherford County Election Commission
League of Women Voters of Murfreesboro/Rutherford County
American Association of University Women
Major Steve Daugherty, U.S. Army, Retired
CivicTN and Proud Voter
Tennessee Civic Engagement Task Force
Tennessee Civic Engagement Coalition
Our community and civic partners continually expanded.

Other Resources

Both the local Democratic and Republican parties contributed to our campus voter registration and get-out-the-vote efforts at MTSU during the 2018 calendar year. There were active College Democrats and College Republicans at MTSU with their chapters fully registered with Student Affairs. Our College Dems and College Repubs tended to work together, table together, and support each other. This continued to be their pattern through the fall, and both organizations were active with events on campus. While we all hoped there would be more candidate involvement on campus this year, our students worked to engage their peers.

Press from 2018

ADP voter registration, Constitution Day, National Voter Registration Day, voting, #VoteTogether Party, and beyond:

- [Tennessee civic summit](https://issuu.com/mtsumag/docs/honors_arete_fall_2018) (https://issuu.com/mtsumag/docs/honors_arete_fall_2018: p. 42)
- [MTSU, local Election Commission team up for new True Blue Voter student registration program](https://mtsunews.com/true-blue-voter-initiative/) (<https://mtsunews.com/true-blue-voter-initiative/>)
- [MTSU, Rutherford County Election Commission work to get students involved](https://www.dnj.com/story/news/local/schools/mtsu/2018/06/12/mtsu-rutherford-county-election-commission-students-involved-voting/696064002/) (<https://www.dnj.com/story/news/local/schools/mtsu/2018/06/12/mtsu-rutherford-county-election-commission-students-involved-voting/696064002/>)
- [MTSU's True Blue Voter drive registers almost 200 students during CUSTOMS events](https://mtsunews.com/true-blue-voter-update-aug2018/) (<https://mtsunews.com/true-blue-voter-update-aug2018/>)
- [MTSU students can register to vote on first day of fall semester classes, too](https://mtsunews.com/first-day-voter-registration-fall2018/) (<https://mtsunews.com/first-day-voter-registration-fall2018/>)
- [MTNews "Voter Registration is Focus of MTSU's Annual Constitution Week Celebration"](https://mtsunews.com/constitution-week-2018-preview/) (<https://mtsunews.com/constitution-week-2018-preview/>)
- [WGNS Radio "Constitution Week: September 17-23, 2018"](https://www.wqnsradio.com/constitution-week-september-17-23-2018-cms-47319) (<https://www.wqnsradio.com/constitution-week-september-17-23-2018-cms-47319>)
- [WSMV "Tennessee Campuses Competing in Voter Registration Drive"](https://www.apnews.com/0f87806a568945e7a8da82f5ea85c101) (<https://www.apnews.com/0f87806a568945e7a8da82f5ea85c101>)
- [MTSU Welcomes Secretary of State for voter Registration Drive](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JmnfyhJW9zq) (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JmnfyhJW9zq>)
- [Secretary of State Hargett visits MTSU to support student voter registration drive](https://mtsunews.com/hargett-voter-registration-drive-2018) (<https://mtsunews.com/hargett-voter-registration-drive-2018>)

- [MTSU, League of Women Voters cancel Sept. 20 gubernatorial forum](https://mtsunews.com/2018-gubernatorial-forum-cancellation/) (<https://mtsunews.com/2018-gubernatorial-forum-cancellation/>)
- [MTSU urges campus toward Election Day with final voter registration push](https://mtsunews.com/voter-registration-push-fall2018/) (<https://mtsunews.com/voter-registration-push-fall2018/>)
- [Last-minute surge boosts MTSU voter registration numbers](https://mtsunews.com/voter-registration-drive-recap-2018/) (<https://mtsunews.com/voter-registration-drive-recap-2018/>)
- [Bring your voter ID Nov. 6 and join MTSU's 'Party at the Polls' at Central Magnet](https://mtsunews.com/midterm-voting-party-2018/) (<https://mtsunews.com/midterm-voting-party-2018/>)

Ballot Access

Leave a Legacy: An Early Voting and Convenience Voting Location on Campus. MTSU is a university that does not have a polling place on campus, as many universities do. On-campus voting is a need long recognized, which has been advocated for many years. Getting an Early Voting and now a Convenience Voting location approved by our county election commission inside our Student Union is a clear, focused, articulated objective for the citizen-scholars within our university. Most entities on campus and in the community understand the importance of proximity-voting in supporting student voting, which is critical in teaching for lifelong, practiced citizenship. In this effort there is renewed energy from many new quarters.

MTSU does not aim for a precinct. We have considered that route in the past and understand that a precinct is more difficult to accomplish. Now with the Convenience Voting bill, a precinct is actually no longer necessary. Our objective instead would be to earn the support of the Rutherford County Election Commission in understanding the importance of a campus polling location in developing future citizens. Supporting the youth vote--the vote of our collegiate citizens--realizes the hope and purpose of a more engaged citizenry for Tennessee. We understand that establishing a county-wide Early Voting and Convenience Voting/Election Day polling location on the MTSU campus would be a powerful legacy for the future of our university and our state.

The state of Illinois has passed legislation that acknowledges the importance of this very principle. Illinois now requires polling places on every public university campus, in the local student union. Texas also has such a piece of legislation that is in progress through its state legislature. Bipartisan legislation by the Tennessee legislature to accomplish this same goal for Tennessee would be an objective we fully support, to positively impact not only MTSU university students but also all the fine university students across the state, who are our leaders of the future

Your Timeline

How often did your coalition meet?

Because we registered students on campus nearly every day up through the last registration day, and because our voter education and get-out-the-vote energy didn't relax a bit until Nov. 7, the core ADP volunteers met weekly, as did the majority of our coalition. Many of us met and worked every day. We emailed and texted each other just as frequently throughout the fall to provide updates on our efforts, share resources, and delegate tasks.

What groundwork did you lay for future elections?

ADP has an energized membership that understands the importance of civic engagement. This fall's critical interim election was another step building toward, and getting us better ready for, the presidential election in 2020. We will continue with voter registration and voter education efforts in the semesters that follow. The process of educating engaged citizens on our campus did not stop

with Nov. 6, 2018. The 2018 effort provided students an intense experience in being more directly involved in our state's new voter registration processes, getting to know the candidates, and becoming more knowledgeable about the voting sites newly available to us. This year was just the newest iteration of creating a vibrant voting culture on campus. We gave our student organizations fresh opportunities to sponsor their own voter registration days, hoping that not only their members but also their many friends and connections got inspired, got registered as well, got involved, got excited, and voted. Now that we have created a more robust base, we will continue to grow and develop the culture of citizenship going forward, as we head into future elections.

Also, we're gearing up for the 2019 and 2020 celebrations of the centennial of the 1920 Nineteenth Amendment. Tennessee was "Perfect 36" in 1920: our state brought in the vote for women. Therefore the celebration is being especially well developed in Tennessee. MTSU plays a major role in the upcoming learning opportunities and festivities, which we are tying to student voting and civic engagement, central to the celebration.

At what point will you evaluate the successes and challenges of your 2018 plan?

The process of review and self evaluation began in November. Key participants have already written reports and after-action reviews. We have identified new initiatives and changes necessary for improvement going forward.

By summer 2019, we expect to receive our 2018 NSLVE results from Tufts. We are interested to learn our outcome, to see where we stand vis-a-vis prior election engagement as captured by NSLVE for MTSU in the 2014 interims. We are confident that our interim-election registrations will prove to have been raised by the combined efforts of so many people and groups this past fall, and that our voter participation numbers will indicate that MTSU student voting was up. We expect to show measurable progress compared to our 2014 interim election data.

Whatever the outcome though, our work for student civic engagement does not abate. We will continue proactively to register our students throughout 2019. Super Tuesday, March 2020 is only a year away. We are moving forward with many new programs and initiatives that became evident to us as areas of need for 2019 and beyond. We keep building.

Point of Contact for Designation Process:

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MTSU 1/28/2019

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