



All In Democracy Challenge Action Plan 2018

I. INTRODUCTION

a. The 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. Voting and Registration Rates

The university participates in the Tufts University National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) which measures voter registration and participation rates at over 750 colleges nationwide. During the 2016 Presidential election the university increased the registration rate from the 2012 election by 5.2% to 85.7% of all eligible students while the total number of registered students who voted in the election increased by 3.1% to 70.4%.

Unfortunately, midterm elections are notoriously lower than Presidential elections. During the 2014 midterm election the university's registration rate was 74.6%, but the rate of those registered students who voted was only 25.8%.

The university recognizes that innovation and advocacy are necessary to inspire social change and seeks to improve both registration and participation rates in this year's midterm 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/more times a week
- 43% reported their political views have changed since enrolling in college.

d. TerpsVote Steering Committee

The university is currently participating in both the All In Democracy Challenge as well as a Big Ten Voter Registration Challenge. Both these efforts have been combined into one steering committee co-chaired by the Student Government Association Director of Civic Engagement, Ms. Georgie Jones, and Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs, John Zacker. The steering committee is comprised of faculty, staff, and students as follows:

- Alison Barlow, Leadership and Community Service Learning (staff)
- Kelley Bishop, University Career Center (staff)
- Celeste Corona, Residence Halls Association (student)
- Gideon Epstein, Student Government Association (student)
- Caden Fabbi, Graduate Student Government (student)
- Tino Fragale, MaryPIRG (student)
- Michael Hanmer, Government and Politics (faculty)
- Georgie Jones, Student Government Association (student)
- James McShay, Stamp Union Center for Campus Life (staff)
- Benjamin Parks, College Park Scholars (faculty)

Britney Sagastizado, United Greek Council (student)
Devorah Stavisky, MaryPIRG (student)
Laura Tan, Department of Resident Life (staff)
Chelsea Truesdell, Orientation Office (staff)
Ashley Venneman, Student Organization Resource Center (staff)
Rachel Vierling, Center for American Politics and Citizenship (staff)
Kyle Whitaker, Graduate Student (staff)
Matthew Wootten, Behavioral and Community Health (staff)
John Zacker, Office of Vice President for Student Affairs (staff).

II. VOTER REGISTRATION and ENGAGEMENT

A. Spring 2018 Initiatives

- a. Renamed the Democracy Challenge Coalition to the TerpsVote Coalition to allow for clear communication and marketing
- b. Hire 2 public service interns - through an agreement among Big Ten institutions, presidents agreed to commit \$10,000 for public service interns to support the Big Ten student voting challenge
- c. Events planned or underway
 - i. Prince George's County Board of Elections Voter Registration Training- April 13th
 - ii. Voter registration at Woofers for Wellness- April 9th
 - iii. Voter registration at Earth Day Festival- April 16th
 - iv. Voter registration at the North Campus Carnival and Leonardtown Block Parties on April 27th
 - v. Voter registration at the weekly on-campus farmer's market on Wednesday afternoons throughout the month of April.
 - vi. Voter registration at Maryland Day, an all day event celebrating learning and discovery at the University of Maryland. It is estimated that 70-80,000 visitors will visit campus on Maryland Day. TerpsVote Coalition will have a table to talk about the importance of voter registration and engagement. The Center for American Politics and Citizenship will also hand out voter registration forms at its table.
 - vii. Advertising and planning for Primary Day on June 26. Although fewer students will be on campus for the Maryland Primary, a potential event to entice voters to show up to the polls could be Puppies for Primary Day. TerpsVote Coalition might reach out to an animal shelter in the area that could host an adoption event near the on-campus polling place on Primary Day. The logistics and regulations involved in organizing such an event are still being explored.
- d. Constitution day - begin planning for Constitution Day recognition
 - i. The Supreme Court has recently heard multiple cases regarding gerrymandering, including a case from Maryland. This topic is timely, important, and would be the discussion topic for a Constitution Day event.
 1. The Center for American Politics and Citizenship has a graphic showing the shape and outlines of the congressional districts in Maryland, which will be used in marketing materials

- 2. Professors and outside speakers will lead small discussions about gerrymandering in Maryland, gerrymandering and the Supreme Court, and how gerrymandering relates to the Constitution and democracy.
 - ii. National Voter Registration Day planning
 - e. Establish mid-term election goal of increasing voter turnout by additional 10%
 - f. Prepare and submit application for Voter Friendly Campus designation
 - g. Distribute NSLVE report to senior campus leadership
 - h. Participate in student voter engagement collaborative through Baltimore College Town.
 - i. Participate in Big Ten Voter Challenge
 - j. Request that the Registrar's Office redesign the student registration page to highlight "register to vote" and to develop a banner to be displayed close to the election
- B. Summer 2018
 - a. Develop communication and marketing strategy commencing September 2018 leading up to mid-term elections
 - i. The communications and marketing strategy will be designed to both raise general awareness on campus and target specific populations that were identified as underrepresented according to our NSLVE report.
 - ii. TerpsVote Coalition will seek to establish partnerships with large student organizations, as well as involve representatives from various academic units who can help send internal emails and raise awareness.
 - iii. Targeted messaging will be created for underrepresented groups such as STEM and business students. The focus of this messaging will be why these students should care about democracy and civic engagement and how specific decisions in the legislature could affect them.
 - iv. Specific tactics and content include:
 - 1. Use the #TerpsVote in all social media posts and other communications.
 - 2. Design branded social media images to ensure consistency across TerpsVote Coalition members, including the creation of a temporary profile picture frame for National Voter Registration Day and Election Day
 - 3. Create short videos that would range from animated explainers of the importance of voting to student testimonials of why they care about civic engagement
 - b. Request that the Vice President for Student Affairs add a brief statement in her summer letter to new students regarding the importance registering to vote and voting
 - c. Request that the Student Government President make prominent mention of voter engagement during the new student convocation
- C. Fall 2018
 - a. National Voter Registration Day events
 - i. On National Voter Registration Day, the Center for American Politics and Citizenship is planning to announce a campaign ad video contest for students to raise awareness of the 2018 midterms and engage voters.
 - b. Constitution Day events
 - i. Coordinate planning and implementation of Constitution Day events.
 - c. Homecoming 2018

- i. The University of Maryland usually hosts various competitions in the week leading up to Homecoming and during Homecoming weekend. The TerpsVote Coalition is hoping to add a registered voter competition to the events with a prize for the student organization with the highest percentage of registered voters among its membership.
- d. Develop and implement communication strategy throughout the fall semester leading up to Election Day
 - i. Publish early voter registration dates for all 50 states
 - ii. Communicate the importance of obtaining absentee ballots or early voters to students particularly out of state students
 - iii. Coordinate University-wide communication campaign
- e. Election Day - get out the vote
 - i. Civic Nation has expressed interest in partnering with the Center for American Politics and Citizenship to bring its #VoteTogether movement to the University of Maryland. #VoteTogether creates celebrations at voting locations and aims to create a sense of community and increase voter turnout.
- f. First Look Fair (Just prior to Constitution Day) - September 12 & 13
- g. Free Fest (Resident Life)
- h. The Stamp All-Niter

III. VOTER EDUCATION

- Promote civic and voter education related lectures and speakers through TerpsVote Coalition.
 - The Center for American Politics and Citizenship is exploring the possibility of a fall 2018 local government speakers series and/or meet the candidate nights.
- Develop credit bearing class

GVPT479A: Seminar in American Politics; Mobilization and Civic Engagement
This course will expose students to political engagement both inside and outside of the classroom. Inside the classroom we will review the key literature on political participation, with an emphasis on mobilization strategies. Both inside and outside the classroom students will team up to develop and implement strategies to provide information to the campus community, particularly fellow students, about voter registration and voting. Along the way, students will learn about various research designs and the analysis of data. The course requires commitments outside of class hours."
- Collaborate with Center for American Politics and Citizenship at the University of Maryland <https://capc.umd.edu/> which might create a new section of its website to serve as a landing page to direct students towards information about voter registration, voting laws, candidates, and nonpartisan voter guides.
- Connect student voter registration to student employment - as students are hired on campus by large scale employers (RecWell, Stamp, Resident Life, Dining, CVS) include voter registration opportunity in payroll paperwork. Investigate trends in students who do not have MD driver's licenses.
- Collaborate with university new student orientation office to develop civic responsibility content for UNIV 100 classes, "welcome to the university," and their equivalent courses.

- Explore opportunities with Athletics to promote voter registration, as well as important dates, absentee ballots, early voting.

IV. CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

The University of Maryland System recently completed an audit of all system institutions in order to determine the degree that Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement is being practiced. A report due to be released in the coming months will provide recommendations for all systems institutions. The TerpsVote Coalition will work collaboratively on any initiatives resulting from this report.

The university is currently engaged in the following partnerships:

- President's National Honor Roll
- Campus Compact - Mid-Atlantic
- National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement
- Big 10 Voter Challenge
- Baltimore Collegetown Voter

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 university's 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 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 TerpsVote Coalition will work campus leaders to design a civic learning and democratic 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 TerpsVote Coalition 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 TurboVote will be analyzed to assess voter registration efforts.