



# Fall 2018 Voter Friendly Campus Action Plan



# University of Michigan-Dearborn



## Table of Contents

2	<b>Executive Summary</b>	7	<b>Tentative Calendar</b>
3	<b>Leadership</b>	8	<b>Learning Outcomes</b>
4	<b>Goals</b>	9	<b>Reporting</b>
4	<b>Barriers</b>	9	<b>Evaluation</b>
5	<b>Strategy</b>		



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# Executive Summary

The University of Michigan-Dearborn was built on the foundation of civic engagement. Six decades ago, the Ford Motor Company saw the need to develop aspiring local engineers and businessmen and provided the University of Michigan with \$6.5 million and 200 acres of land to found the Dearborn Center in 1959.<sup>1</sup> Located on Henry Ford's former Fair Lane and within a stone's throw of the Ford Estate, the University of Michigan-Dearborn

southeastern Michigan, and becoming a Voter Friendly Campus fits squarely into our metropolitan vision. Although UM-Dearborn has developed programs such as an annual Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service, Academic Service Learning courses, volunteer days of service, and various other opportunities for students to engage in their greater community, efforts to bolster

an undergraduate student studying Political Science at UM-Dearborn and member of the Civic Leadership Board. As part of our action plan, we intend on forming a Democratic Engagement Coalition (DEC) that will work to sustain and develop our short-term and long-term goals that are outlined later in the goals section on page 4. We as an institution understand that it takes a village to make our hopes of high student voting



**"THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN-DEARBORN HAS BECOME A HUB OF COMMUNITY GROWTH IN A REGION THAT DEMANDS LEADERS FOR THE REBIRTH IT HAS LONG YEARNED FOR."**

has become a hub of community growth in a region that demands leaders for the rebirth it has long yearned for.

In our University's mission statement, we express our institution's appreciation for our framework of metropolitan impact, explaining that "we have set ourselves apart in higher education through intentional, meaningful engagement with local industry, government and nonprofits." The University of Michigan-Dearborn is a difference maker for

voter engagement have been sparse and uncoordinated in recent memory. Sparing an effort by our Student Government to promote Turbovote a few years ago, voter engagement on campus has not been a top priority.

This action plan will outline how UM-Dearborn plans to integrate voter registration, education, and turnout on a campus-wide, systemic scale. The plan was written by Brendan Gallagher-Coordinator for Civic Engagement- and Jordan Wohl,

rates a reality, and we plan to deeply collaborate with administrators, faculty, staff, community leaders, and students on the Democratic Engagement Coalition. We also intend on obtaining data from the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) to inform our efforts and measure our progress.

This action plan will be active from September 1, 2018 and will be reviewed for the winter semester after January 1, 2019.

<sup>1</sup> <https://umdearborn.edu/about/university-history>

# Leadership

*The UM-Dearborn Voter Friendly Campus action plan will be spearheaded by Brendan Gallagher and Jordan Wohl, along with the Democratic Engagement Coalition (DEC). For more information on the DEC, see page 5.*

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President and Vice President of Student  
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One Student Representative from the  
Political Science Association

One Representative from the League of  
Women Voters



# Goals

## *Short-term*

- Create a Democratic Engagement Coalition (DEC).
- Develop a guiding mission statement to dictate the direction of the DEC and voter engagement efforts on campus.
- Programs: Facilitate three events that collectively address each of the three pillars of Voter Engagement (Education, Registration, Turnout) so that students can learn more about elections, how to register to vote, and why their vote matters. See the Tentative Calendar (Section IV) for the specific pillars of voter engagement each of the three program addresses.
- Campus-wide letter to all students, faculty, and staff from UM-Dearborn Chancellor Dominico Grasso each semester emphasizing the importance of civic responsibility and voter engagement.
- Working with External Relations at our University to adopt and support the #VictorsVote campaign, hashtag, and logo.
- Acquire Turbovote for voter registration and programming by the beginning of the Fall 2018 Semester.

## *Long-term*

- Establish the University Center as a polling location for local, state, and national elections.
- Work with campus leadership to either close campus or cancel classes for election day so that students, faculty, and staff can either stay in their local community to vote or come to the University Center to vote.
- Secure a voter registration drive at all freshman and transfer orientations in 2019.



# Barriers

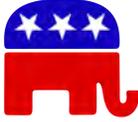
**1** The biggest barrier that we expect to face is the lack of an existing system in place for voter engagement. Because we are starting from scratch, our goals and vision will start small. This approach will allow us to build incrementally on our successes and establish a strong foundation for a greater impact in coming years.

**2** The second challenge that we will face is being a commuter campus. Because a majority of our students do not live on campus, our efforts around the three pillars of voter engagement will have to address democratic engagement in students' home communities.

**3** A third barrier is addressing the disconnect between main campus and the Fairlane Center (FC). The Fairlane Center houses our College of Business and College of Education, Health, and Human Services. It is essential that we understand the culture of the Fairlane Center and be in constant communication with campus partners located there, in an effort to coordinate a campus-wide effort of democratic engagement.

# Strategy

The following organizations have been identified as preliminary strategic partners in our efforts towards programming, developing resources, and fostering a culture of voter engagement on campus.

 <p>AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL: UM-DEARBORN CHAPTER</p>	 <p>CAMPUS CONSERVATIVES</p>	 <p>COLLEGE DEMOCRATS</p>
 <p>DEMOCRATIC ENGAGEMENT COALITION</p>	 <p>EMGAGE</p>	 <p>POLITICAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATION</p>
 <p>SECRETARY OF STATE</p>	 <p>STUDENT GOVERNMENT</p>	 <p>INSTITUTE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT</p>

\*Organizations that will be representatives on the Democratic Engagement Coalition



## STEP 1: THE DEMOCRATIC ENGAGEMENT COALITION

Once we are able to form the DEC, we will meet during or before the fall semester to lay the foundation of the coalition. The DEC will develop a mission statement to guide the work that will be done on campus related to campus-wide voter and democratic engagement efforts.

The DEC will meet twice a year--once in the fall semester and once during the winter semester.

The DEC will be expected to serve as a resource for democratic engagement efforts by providing suggestions for all related initiatives and influencing campus policy and culture on the subject of voter engagement.



Voter education, registration, and turnout programming and initiatives are outlined in the **Tentative Calendar**. See page seven for our Tentative Calendar with specific learning outcomes included.

Our tentative calendar addresses voter engagement on campus through a collective-impact by seeking out community-based political organizations for co-sponsorship and collaborating with relevant student organizations for partnering.

One of our long terms goals is to establish our campus as a polling center and securing a voter registration drive at new student orientations. We intend on leveraging the DEC to accomplish both short term and long term goals.

The **#VictorsVote** hashtag will be the university's branding for voter engagement. We plan on putting the logo above all over UM-Dearborn's marketing related to voter engagement. This marketing could include social media platforms, promo items, banners, flyers, and various other mediums.



# Tentative Calendar

Fall 2018

6  
SEP

## Fall Welcome Event

*with the Secretary of State*

The Secretary of State will have a mobile office on the University Center patio. The event will be a part of a larger organization fair, where we will be handing out #VictorsVote-branded promo items and getting students registered to vote on Turbovote.



4  
OCT

## Midterm Election Summit

*and Turbovote promo*

The Summit will be an informational forum on local midterm election races and where local ballot boxes are. There will be food and we will be handing out bookmarks to attendees on where their specific polling location is.

This will be a collaborative event, and we plan on co-sponsoring with other strategic partners. We will also be registering students to vote through Turbovote.



30  
OCT

## Sample Ballot Box Event

*and Turbovote promo*

On the University Center Stage (student union space), we will set up a sample ballot box to simulate what a polling station looks like. We will be registering students to vote on Turbovote and will continue to hand out polling location bookmarks and #VictorsVote promo items.

This event will be a part of a larger Civic Engagement Week



 - Voter Registration

 - Voter Education

 - Voter Turnout

# Learning Outcomes

As a result of our voter education initiatives, students will feel more comfortable, confident, and competent when it comes to the process of voting.

Through programming, resources, education, and awareness, students will have an in-depth understanding of the whole process of voting.

## **Grasp basic voter engagement processes**

### **The value of voting**

Active participation in a local, state, or national election is vital to the health and sustainability of our democracy.

The candidates who are elected have power over the water we drink, the air we breathe, and the land we live on. It is essential that our students understand the power of their vote, the value of casting a values-based vote, and the influence we have in a Representative Democracy.

As a result of students' participation in democratic programming, and access to relevant resources, students will develop critical-thinking skills through exposure and engagement with diverse perspectives. It is our mission to ensure that students on our campus challenge their pre-dispositions on democratic issues in order to make informed choices on election day.

## **Critical-thinking and informed decision making**

### **Development of civic identity**

Our voter engagement work aims to nurture in students a civic identity.

Through the development and acquisition of knowledge, skills, and values necessary for being a productive member of our society, students will develop a holistic sense of how engaging in the democratic process is vital to being civic-minded.

# Reporting

This action plan will be shared with both the DEC and our institution's senior level leadership in an effort to unite our campus community around this common objective. We also hope to be as transparent as possible with our student body as we progress and develop an understanding of voter engagement on our campus and how we can collectively work towards increasing it.

The data that we collect and the avenues for reporting the results to campus will be determined by the Democratic Engagement Coalition.

# Evaluation

The 2018-19 school year will mark the first full year in recent memory that the University of Michigan-Dearborn will be carrying out a coordinated, campus wide democratic engagement campaign. Understanding this, we expect that our evaluation of the progress made during the fall semester will determine the path we take for future democratic engagement initiatives at UM-Dearborn. We plan on tracking our progress through individual program attendance, Turbovote data, and data collected through the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE). This will help us determine what initiatives are most effective in engaging students on campus.

We intend on being transparent with the campus community about our progress towards reaching each and every one of our short-term and long-term goals, sharing relevant information through #VictorsVote social media accounts and other avenues identified by the DEC.

