Action Plan for Southwestern Michigan College(SMC)

To Increase Civic and Political Engagement and Voting Rates for the 2020 General election.

The Definition of Civic Engagement

"Civic engagement means working to make a difference in the civic life of our communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values and motivation to make that difference. It means promoting the quality of life in a community, through both political and non-political processes.

A morally and civically responsible individual recognizes himself or herself as a member of a larger social fabric and therefore considers social problems to be at least partly his or her own; such an individual is willing to see the moral and civic dimensions of issues, to make and justify informed moral and civic judgments, and to take action when appropriate."

Excerpts from *Civic Responsibility and Higher Education*, edited by Thomas Ehrlich, published by Oryx Press, 2000. http://www.nytimes.com/ref/college/collegespecial2/coll_aascu_defi.html

Proposal

Obviously, an important topic and concern. What are we teaching our students? Math, Psychology, English, Welding, Accounting; yes, indeed, all of these but what do you do with it? Each one of the definition presented discusses involvement in our communities. We are a community college so by definition we should be involved in Civic Engagement. Southwestern Michigan College should be involved in the process. I would like to "get to know" The Democracy Commitment" better before we consider a commitment to this organization.

At SMC we are small but mighty…. I believe this initiative should be cross campus involving all parts of our community. I can already think of the Honors Program (and PTK) students having programs in their areas of interest. Accounting students working with the laws that affect their professions. STEM students being involved with the agencies that affect the environment, "get

out the vote" programs, bringing (more) local and state legislators on campus, Social Work students working in their policy areas, re-enforcing and acknowledging some of the already great things our students, faculty and staff are already doing, just to name a few off the top of my head.

Michigan changed it voting registration laws by Proposal in 2018 which changes, how to register (they hope to have on line registration soon) deadlines and more. Michigan Primary is March 10, 2020(https://mvic.sos.state.mi.us/)

<div align="center">

Specific Goals

</div>

1.) Obtain background information and baseline information to start process.

Plan: Attend Michigan Voting Summit, location to be determined in the Spring
Attend the Conference, Civic Learning & Democratic Engagement Meeting in June 2020.
https://www.aascu.org/meetings/CLDE20/

This we will be our fourth year of participation, we will have two people attending from our campus

2.) We have been using the National Study of Learning, Voting and Engagement (NSLVE) report and will use 2016 data to help us formulate our goals here.

3.) Increase information and access to all on campus about voter registration.

Plan: Embedding voter registration information in the SMC's homepage, Moodle (our course management systems), and/or Wired (our online portal operated by SMC).

4.) Increase Voter Registration

Plan: Voter registration available during freshman orientation, in residential areas and during Campus Bash

Participation in National Voter Registration Day- September 22nd, 2020.
(https://nationalvoterregistrationday.org/about/)
.

Increase by 5%

We plan to coordinate with faculty members to encourage their students to register to vote in the first weeks of classes during both our Spring (January-May) and Fall (September- December) semester. There will be work being done during the summer, but the number of students is small.

5.) Voter Education

<u>January 28th, 2020</u>: Why should I Vote? Breakdown of the importance of voting and the effect that it can have on a community.

<u>February 4th, 2020</u>: Running for Office: Afternoon/Evening with City Council Members Pat Bakeman and Danielle Lucas – asking questions about why they decided to run, the ins and outs of running a political campaign

<u>February 18th, 2020</u>: The Art of Politics: Deep dive into posters, buttons, shirts, and other various forms of propaganda candidates have used during campaigns in the past. We have pizza (maybe provided by Propaganda Pizza).

<u>March 17th, 2020</u>: Primary Results Handout: breakdown of voting percentages and what it all means for the General Election.

Similar activities during fall semester leading up to General Election

Plan: Including a Civic Engagement component in our EDUC 120 which is an introduction to college course required by most incoming students.

Plan: Host Constitution Day September 17, 2020

 Use of Social Media to organize social media campaigns to get students active and voting on campus. This would involve sending regular updates through various social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) to remind students of important deadlines and other pertinent information regarding the elections, deadlines, and the candidates.

Use of Wired to have reminders posted once students and faculty members sign in to remind them Primary and Election Day voting.

6.) Increased Voter Turnout

Plan: Information provided in classes, social media use to "remember to vote", information in Wired.

7.) Increase participation across campus.

Plan: Engage faculty and staff in process.

January 20<u>th</u>, 2020: SMC Votes Kick-off Party: Presentation of SMC's voting history, voter participation goal setting for the 2020 General Election. Leads into pizza a movie night in the SAC Theater

March 3<u>rd</u>, 2020: Michigan Primary Info Night: Do an afternoon/evening of going through the primary ballot, maybe invite local candidates to campus.

Similar activities during fall semester leading up to General Election

Identify and engage student groups in process

NSLVE Report and Input

We went down slightly (-0.1 %) from 2012 to 2016 for voting rates. We just started out planned involvement campus wide in 2017. We saw an increase in participation from 2014 to 2018 but midterm and general elections are not comparable.

We would like to bring all those numbers up. We believe Michigan's change in law will help with registration numbers. We are hoping more educational and visibility will increase voting turn out as well.

The report show that traditional age student follows the pattern of low voter turnout; by involving our Student Activity Center, we hope to change that

Coalition:

Who are the other team members who will be involved in the project/ Example members include student leaders, deans, staffers and faculty?

 If not yet known, what are the academic institution's offices that will be involved?

We have had several administrative changes in the last month or will be changing the first of the year~
 Dr Joe Odenwald; President (as of January 1)
Dr David Fleming; Vice President for Instruction
Dean of Arts and Sciences
Dean for the Schools of Business and Technology (currently vacant)
Dr Melissa Kennedy Dean for School of Nursing and Allied Health
Dr. Angela Evans Office of Institutional Research
Faculty Members from various departments and schools
Representative from Student groups.

Staff and Faculty Coordinators

Mr. Branden Pompey; Assistant Manager of the Student Activities Center (SAC)
Dr Mary D Young-Marcks; Professor Social Sciences

Work will begin in January 2020.

<div align="center">

Point of Contact for Designation Process

</div>

Dr Mary D Young-Marcks; Professor Social Sciences
58900 Cherry Grove Road
Dowagiac, MI 49047
269.782.1287
myoung@swmich.edu