University of Massachusetts Dartmouth
ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge
DRAFT Action Plan

Nathaniel Roberts, Deirdre Healy, Max Ciarlone

Executive Summary

The UMassD Votes Coalition was initiated by student leaders at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth, with the help of the Leduc Center for Civic Engagement, for the purpose of creating a "culture of voting" on campus at every level, from students to administration.This "culture of voting" would be one where campus community members are expectant of fulfilling their civic duties through voting and through helping others vote. The purpose of this document is to describe the current situation, lay out the basic structure of this Coalition, and describe our plan to 1. institutionalize the expectation of voting and 2. Increase voter registration, education, and turnout.

Landscape

Civic and community engagement are values that are deeply rooted at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth. Led by the Leduc Center for civic engagement UMass Dartmouth students and faculty are involved in a range of civic engagement projects at international, national, state and local levels, while maintaining partnerships with a large number of southcoast community based organizations and k-12 schools. Our SouthCoast Serves collaborative of over 50 partners meets on a monthly basis to strengthen service and volunteerism in the region. Each year the university documents growing numbers of service hours that peaked last year at 271,149.

The Massachusetts Public Interest Research Group (MA Pirg) has a strong presence on campus and has long been involved in encouraging students to vote through their New Voters Project campaign.

The Sunrise Movement is a recent organization operating on campus that prioritizes electoral work through the frame of climate justice issues. They have begun their voting registration efforts in the last month of the Fall Semester and so far have registered just over 100 students.

Current Assessment

College students vote at the lowest rates of any demographic across the nation. In addition they serve as the largest and most diverse group of unregistered voters. This happens for a myriad of reasons, chief among which are the barriers that students face when going to college, such as needing to re-register to vote or making plans to travel home on a school day. For these reasons, civic engagement has been a priority for UMass Dartmouth every year. From hosting ballot question discussion panels in 2018 to working with our local officials to bring the polls to campus in 2016, UMass Dartmouth sees the importance of education and mobilization of voters. That is why UMass Dartmouth ranks right at the national average in voter turnout. Since 2018 though, UMass Dartmouth has been even more active in engaging student voters after more than doubling voter turnout (from 16.9% in 2014 to 34.6% in 2018) and earning the Silver Campus award with the All In challenge. There is much more to be done on campus to attain higher rates of voter engagement but the Coalition feels strongly about the plans to achieve the goals outlined above.

Previously there has been no concentrated grassroots effort to increase student voter participation, meaning a lot of the changes occuring between comparable elections are the result of national trends as opposed to local institutional changes. This is not to discount previous efforts. For the 2016 General Election, student efforts led to an early voting location on

campus, but no effort was given to a Get Out The Vote operation that year. In 2018 hourly shuttles were provided to off campus polling locations alongside a registration campaign.

UMassD Votes Coalition Structure
Leadership
Liz Anusauskas, Chair

Hannah Robinson, Vice Chair
Deirdre Healy, Secretary

Members
Daria Davis-Flemming, President, NAACP UMass Dartmouth
Betty Elias, Vice President, NAACP UMass Dartmouth
LaSalla Hall, Assistant Director, Fredrick Douglas Unity House
Deirdre Healy, Director, Office of Community Service, Leduc Center
Liz Anusauskas, Chair, UMassD Votes
Hannah Robinson, Hub Coordinator, Sunrise Southcoast
Max Ciarlone, Organizer, MASSPIRG
Nate Roberts, Hub Coordinator, Sunrise Southcoast
Michael Goodman, President, Faculty Senate
Shannon Jenkins, Professor, Political Science Department
Doug Roscoe, Professor, Political Science Department
Hugh Dunn, Government Relations, UMass Dartmouth
Amanda Kuffoh, Student Trustee, UMass Dartmouth
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Community Partners
Coalition for Social Justice, 1199SEIU, Climate Reality Southcoast, Sunrise Southcoast,
UMassD PIRG

Meetings
The coalition has met, and will continue to meet at least once a month during the semester.
More meetings may occur during busier months (such as near elections). The leadership of the
committee will determine if more meetings are to be held.

Strategic Plan
Goals & Metrics
Registration
- Register 1500 students, about 20% of the undergraduate population

- To increase our 2018 Registration Rate by 5 points, from 79.4% to 84.4%

Education
- Host three educational events per semester
- Develop survey to measure student knowledge on upcoming elections

Turnout
- Gold from the All In Challenge (40-49% voter participation)
- To increase our 2018 Voting Rate by 5 points, from 50.2% to 55.2%

Overarching Strategy

There are three main tenets of our plan: registration, education, and turnout. The fourth part, communications, underlines the main three. This section will enumerate the different actions we intend to take to achieve our goals.

Registration
- Biweekly registration drives in the Campus Center
- Residential Assistant programs
- Multiple class raps per day leading up to voter registration deadlines
- TurboVote link sent out to students using campus communications systems

Education
- "Kitchen Counter Talks" (informal group gatherings to discuss the upcoming elections)
- Large Town Hall forums for students to ask questions about the candidates

Turnout
- Art sculptures in the campus quad
- Campus wide emails about elections
- Banner on website about elections
- Postering residential buildings
- Teach-in day before and the day of election
- Shuttles to voting location near campus

Communications
- Social media strategy (in more depth in separate section)
- Campus wide emails regarding each of the three tenants
- Develop separate campus website page about voting
- Campus Entrance "Welcome" Sign
- Posters

Additional Potential Strategies

Ballot Access

Currently, UMass Dartmouth is the only precinct within Dartmouth without its own polling location, meaning students must find time to get to the day-of polling location which would be at least 10 minute excursion assuming students have a car. The Dartmouth Clerk's Office is

generally the only early voting location. Once in the past the Clerk's Office has allowed an early voting location on campus.

One student could develop a relationship with the Town Clerk to try and convince her to bring back the early voting location on campus. It might also be helpful if the Town Clerk is included in the Town Gown relationship.

Getting a department on campus, previously Public Affairs, to pay for transportation to the same day polling locations would be helpful for students without access to their own cars.

Barriers

The Dartmouth Town Clerk isn't very receptive to helping students vote and is convinced it's not part of her job. Unfortunately the only accountability for the Clerk are the voters of Dartmouth and not the Town Administrator.

The Coalition needs greater access to student voter registration data to accurately set goals and hit them.

Registration
Registration Drives
At least twice a week registration drives run by student groups.
RA Programs
Work with Residential Assistants to implement voter registration into their mandatory programing and floor events.
Class Raps
Student groups often go into classrooms and in the first five minutes of classes give an overview of their organization in an attempt to recruit students. Using this time to talk about the importance of voting and then passing around voter registration forms would be effective.
TurboVote
Our campus pays to use the services of TurboVote. We should use computers at campus sponsored events to register students to vote. We can also send out the link to our TurboVote through campus wide emails.

Education
Kitchen Table Talks
These style events would be more informal discussions meeting different students groups where they are. The purpose would be to get a general feel of what the student campus community knows and feels about upcoming elections.

Town Hall Forums
These events would be larger gatherings where invited guests (students/professors/outside campus guests) would answer student questions on either a specific political issue or a range of political issues.
Debate Watch Parties
Organized debate watch parties. Food could be used to entice student participation.
Turnout

Art Sculptures

Working with different student groups or art professors to develop sculptures relating to voting to put on the campus quad/around different campus buildings. These would act as a reminder to vote.

Campus Wide Emails

Sample Text (to be written)

Website

A separate page on the UMass Dartmouth website to act as a gathering page for voting information (registration, dates, etc).

Postering

Posters with events or election times put up in main campus buildings and residential buildings.

Teach-In

Get professors to agree to talk about why voting is important in the context of the class they are within for either part of a class period or an entire class period the day before an election or on an election.

Shuttles

Shuttle service offered to the day-of polling location at least every hour.

Communications

Social Media Strategy

Social media should primarily focus on instagram. Instagram has the highest potential to garner students attention because they are more willing to "follow back" on this platform. Visual media is also very appealing versus text.

Increasing Followers

An effective way to gain followers is to "follower crawl" through other accounts that pertain to the UMass Dartmouth community such as @umdstudenttrustee or @umassdstudents. Following every account that follows these accounts will increase the likelihood of a follow back. After a few days you can expect any account that has not already followed you back will not. Now, we should unfollow any account that does not follow us back, then follow them again to give them another notification about our account. To do this unfollow/follow strategy a periphery follower management app should be downloaded and used. This unfollow then follow is especially potent if we do it the same day as an important post (i.e: a post on Monday about the Election on Tuesday).

Increasing Engagement

Generally, photos, as compared to graphics, tend to perform better. Mixing the two is fine as long as they tend more towards being photos with light graphics.

Posts that encourage students to repost to their story are effective. The post become sort of a badge to be displayed (i.e: a post stating "I'm voting because _____"). Encouraging reposts from the personal networks of the students involved in the coalition can help spur an organic virality.

Using Instagram "stories" and polls almost every day to keep followers aware of the coalitions existence. We can message any people who answer affirmatively to our polls to recruit them to volunteer (if we need volunteers).

Model Framework

Three weeks before an important event (like an election) we should begin posting a general reminder graphic. Posting this same graphic every week at the same time until the event will increase our followers awareness of the event. As the event becomes closer we should increase the frequency of posts to at least one main post every day.

Potential Media Campaigns
- "Why I Vote" videos
- "Why I Vote" Instagram photo fill in, "I'm voting for _____"

Important Dates
- January 21, 2020 - First day of classes
- February 12, 2020 – Last day to register to Vote (Regular) for Presidential Primary Election
- February 14, 2020- Valentine's day (fall in love with voting)
- February 24-28- Primary early voting (although I need to confirm if this bill passed)
- March 2, 2020- Deadline to request an absentee ballot
- March 3, 2020 - Presidential Primary
- May through August – New Student Orientation Voter Registration
- August 26, 2020- Deadline to register for the Congressional Primary
- September 15, 2020- Congressional Primary (Could be changing to the 1st)
- September 16, 2020 – Constitution Day Event
- September 22, 2020 – National Voter Registration Day Event
- October 14, 2020 – Last day to register to vote Presidential Election
- October 19, 2020 – Early Voting BEGINS
- October 28, 2020 – Party at the Polls
- November 2, 2020 –Early Voting ENDS
- November 3, 2020 – Election Day
- November 3, 2020 – Election Day Results Watch Party