

ALL IN Campus Action Plan: 2020

The University of Michigan-Ann Arbor



Executive Summary

The Ginsberg Center for Community Service and Learning serves as the home for nonpartisan democratic engagement efforts at the University of Michigan. The Center is also the hub for the [Big Ten Voting Challenge](#), launched in September of 2017. All fourteen of the Big Ten universities participate in the Challenge, with an aim to increase student voter registration and turnout.

This action plan was authored by Erin Byrnes, Lead for Democratic Engagement with input from campus stakeholders, and will be implemented in the lead up to the 2020 Presidential Election. The action plan will guide our team as we seek to be nimble in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, with an aim to focus on absentee voting and online voter registration in accordance with social distancing directives. Our action plan will serve as a guidepost for voter registration, education and turnout as well as our social media and broader digital presence, and will be implemented by Ginsberg Center staff, an in-house student leadership team, and students trained on voter registration best practices.

Leadership

Core Team:

- Erin Byrnes, Lead for Democratic Engagement and the Big Ten Voting Challenge
- Edie Goldenberg, Professor, Political Science and Public Policy
- Logan Woods, Ph.D. candidate
- Jacquelyn Beaudry, Ann Arbor City Clerk

Campus Stakeholders:

- Student Groups:
 - Turn up Turnout (TUT), Central Student Government, WeListen, Black Student Union, NAACP, College Democrats and College Republicans, etc.
- Office of New Student Programs
- Division of Student Life and Ginsberg Center
- Ford School of Public Policy
- Office of the Vice President for Government Relations
- Athletic Department
- University Housing and Dining
- U-M Libraries
- U-M Museum of Art (UMMA)
- Office of the Registrar
- 19 Schools and Colleges at the University of Michigan

Nonprofit and Government Organizations:

- Andrew Goodman Foundation
- Ann Arbor City Clerk's Office
- Ann Arbor League of Women Voters
- Campus Election Engagement Project (CEEP)
- Michigan Secretary of State
- Public Interest Research Group (PIRG)
- Voter Friendly Campus

Commitment

University of Michigan President Mark Schlissel has committed to supporting the Big Ten Voting Challenge over the past three years, and has signed on to the ALL IN Presidential Commitment in 2020. President Schlissel noted in his official announcement of the Challenge, "The right to vote is one of our most powerful freedoms, and participation in elections is essential for a democratic society. Voting in elections gives you a voice in the decisions that affect local, state, and national issues."

The University Registrar has been instrumental in institutionalizing voter registration, providing support for a TurboVote presence in high-traffic digital spaces via the Wolverine Access web portal. Thousands of students have created a TurboVote profile via Wolverine Access since September of 2017. U-M has also dedicated resources to the 2020 Census, and will continue to

share messaging via digital platforms as Census workers conduct home interviews from late May through mid-August.

The Ginsberg Center has also demonstrated a commitment to student voter engagement and education around the issues by creating a staff position focused on this work. The Center has been successful in weaving voter registration into the fabric of the University's culture by working with the Office of New Student Programs to engage students during new and transfer student orientation sessions; collaborating with Housing and Dining to host voter registration events and share information on digital signage; instituting a student ambassador position in each of our nineteen schools and colleges, and most recently launching the [GoVote.umich.edu](https://www.govote.umich.edu) website.

In 2020, our team will work with staff at the U-M Dearborn and Flint campuses to ensure greater collaboration particularly across digital platforms. We will expand the [GoVote](https://www.govote.umich.edu) site to include campus-specific information and voter registration tools, and shared marketing materials under the *Go Blue, Go Vote* umbrella. We are excited to expand our commitment to student voting across the University of Michigan's tri-campus system.

Landscape

The University of Michigan-Ann Arbor offers a robust series of resources around democratic engagement. Support at the presidential level has been critical to our work, as President Schlissel's endorsement of the Big Ten Voting Challenge solidified a commitment to nonpartisan student voter engagement starting in 2017.

Our campus utilizes NSLVE data to set goals for student voting rates in major elections, and to target messaging and outreach to students in the schools and colleges with the lowest voting rates. With students from all fifty states, our team supports voter registration according to individual student preference based on where they want their voice and vote to be counted.

U-M is set to host the second of three Presidential Debates on October 15th, and a fall 2020 theme semester with over one hundred related courses will provide students with direct access to dialogue and learning around key issues. Student Life has multiple work teams in place, focusing on media literacy, issues exploration, campus climate and student voting. The Debate will shine a bright light on the importance of participation in the democratic process, and U-M is positioned to use the Debate as a catalyst for broader learning in addition to the event itself.

Collaboration across our campus, the U-M system, the Big Ten Conference and the State of Michigan are highly encouraged by upper administrators. Our landscape of partners is rich and reciprocal, spanning community colleges and universities, nonprofit organizations and government agencies. The Turn Up Turnout (TUT) student group is a close partner, and their outreach committee partners directly with Central Student Government to share messaging and

engagement opportunities with students across campus. U-M is home to 1,500 student organizations, with dozens focused on politics across the partisan spectrum, and our team is working to create a strategic plan for enhanced collaboration with student orgs for the fall 2020 semester.

Our team recognizes that Michigan is a purple state, and part of the climate we operate within involves a concern about the appearance of partisanship. Our team firmly believes that supporting student voter registration is critical to a thriving democracy, and our messaging and conversations with students are strictly nonpartisan. Our aim is to encourage all students regardless of political ideology to be curious about the democratic process, and to actively engage by seeking out fact-based information, educating themselves about the candidates and issues on the ballot, and getting out to vote while also supporting peers who are eligible to do the same.

Goals

The 2018 midterm election saw U-M Ann Arbor's student voting rate nearly triple, moving from 14% in 2014 to 41% in 2018. As we plan for the November 3rd election, our campus goal is a student voting rate of at least 75%, with an aim to nearly double our 2016 rate of 44.7%.

As our team has expanded, and our foundation has been strengthened in the last two years, our goals have become more inclusive. We have begun to work closely with the International Center and have already provided a workshop on the U.S. presidential primary process. We will partner again in the fall to engage international students virtually in dialogue and learning about the presidential election process, while highlighting that the University is hosting the second of three planned Presidential Debates, to be held on our campus in mid-October. Our goal is to expand the engagement of international students with the U.S. election process, and to offer space for learning not only about our current system, but also about election processes in students' nations of origin.

We also plan to work with our Office for Students with Disabilities, to ensure that access to voting information and voting process are unencumbered. Additionally, we have begun to work with affinity-based student organizations and will broaden our coalition in the fall term to deliver information and materials that speak to students on a personal level. Our team recognizes that the 'how' of voting is important, and the 'why' of voting just as much so. Student engagement with and dialogue around critical issues makes voting less perfunctory and leads to a more informed and passionate student voting block.

Strategy

Michigan Student Voting Council

The Voting Challenge team will partner with Secretary Benson's office to lead a statewide effort with up to twenty-five students from community colleges and four-year institutions during the summer of 2020. The Council will offer students two committee options: one that focuses on content creation with regard to boilerplate language around absentee voting and online voter registration, and one focused on outreach to campus staff, students and student organizations and city clerks in college towns to ensure effective distribution of materials.

Public health will be a primary focus for all Voting Challenge work leading up to the Presidential Election in November. U-M plans to have a public health-informed fall 2020 semester, and student voting will be a key component as our team focuses on increasing the rate of absentee voting and online voter registration. The fall term will also provide an opportunity to educate students on which elected officials make specific decisions around the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Challenge team will work with contacts across the Big Ten Conference to develop effective strategies for online voter registration and messaging around absentee voting to minimize the number of students present at campus polling locations on Election Day. We will also work with our City Clerk to implement best practices at campus polling locations, including physical distancing and personal hygiene habits to limit the possible spread of any and all viruses.

National Programs

U-M serves as a premier partner with Vote Early Day, and will work with fellow conference challenges to promote voting early on or by October 24th.

Our team is also a co-designer campus as part of the Ask Every Student program, and will work with other campuses to design scalable strategies for asking every eligible student to register to vote.

U-M will participate in National Voter Registration Day for the fifth consecutive year, and as our campus leadership unveils fall 2020 plans, our team will prepare for student engagement on September 22nd accordingly.

Tri-Campus Collaboration

During the spring and summer months, U-M's three campuses will continue to work closely to develop shared messaging and marketing, likely under the umbrella of 'Go Blue. Go Vote.' Our goal will be to create a cohesive marketing language, and a shared digital presence via the GoVote website and TurboVote to allow for greater alignment across the U-M system.

August Primary Elections

August 4th will serve as the date for local, state and federal primaries across the state. Campus community members will be encouraged to register online and vote absentee, and information regarding candidates and voting processes will be outlined on the GoVote website. Michigan's Secretary of State announced in mid-May that all registered voters across the state will be mailed an absentee ballot application, and we will work with our students to ensure that they take full advantage of this opportunity by updating their address and understanding the process of requesting and then completing their absentee ballot.

October Presidential Debate

The October 15th Presidential Debate is set to be hosted at the U-M Ann Arbor campus, and will align closely with Michigan's voter registration laws, as the last day for students to register on campus will be October 19th. Our team will make a major push to get students registered in October, with the debate serving as a tool for education and engagement around social issues, democratic processes including registration, and candidates on the ballot, including but not limited to presidential candidates.

November Presidential Election

Student voter registration, education and turnout will be our team's three primary areas of focus and work leading up to Election Day. Our methods will transition to promote online voter registration via the Secretary of State's website and TurboVote, to limit or prevent the need for the in-person voter registration events our team has hosted traditionally. No-reason absentee voting will factor prominently in our messaging, as a means to promote voting early and to alleviate large groups of people at polling locations and the City Clerk's office.

We will work with our City Clerk to provide accurate, consistent messaging around registering at the Clerk's office within fourteen days of the election, per Michigan voting law. Our team will also provide sample ballots for students to review, and we will utilize 'retired' voting booths at strategic campus locations to simulate the voting experience in advance of Election Day.

Get Out the Vote efforts will be critical to ensure that students are both motivated and activated to get to the polls on November 3rd. Social media advertisements, campus bus ads, digital signage in libraries, residence and dining halls, and information on Wolverine Access and Canvas will allow for GOTV at a physical distance. Our team may also host in-person information tables to provide students with nonpartisan voting guides and registration information, depending on the public health measures in place at that point.

Social media platforms will be utilized to promote voter registration and election engagement. Sponsored posts and 'takeovers' of the University's main accounts will be key, and education around absentee voting and online voter registration will be two main focus areas.

The [GoVote website](#) launched in January of 2020, and now serves as the central digital destination for U-M students seeking voter registration support and election information. The GoVote site provides information on upcoming elections, voting laws, voter registration deadlines and registration events across campus. As we look ahead to the fall 2020 semester, the site will include presidential debate information including the theme semester and related educational events, and will host a tab for each of the three U-M campuses with campus-specific information and resources.

Timeline

May-August

- Launch Michigan Student Voting Council
- Partner with Office of New Student Programs to provide voter information via virtual orientation modules
- MPlanner launches with registration deadlines and election dates included
- Create central repository of content for social media (videos and graphics) in June and July for launch in August and September
- Social media push for August primary in Michigan
- Connect with faculty around including [student voting language](#) in syllabi
- By August 15th, drop boxes will be positioned across campus for students to deliver completed voter registration forms. Locations to include: Mason Hall, the Michigan Union and residence halls

September

- Work with professors teaching themed courses that relate to the Presidential Debate to be hosted on campus, in an effort to promote student voting
- Host satellite offices in campus libraries in partnership with Ann Arbor City Clerk
- Post voter engagement campaign button to all Student Life websites that links to the GoVote website
- Host campus-wide Voter Registration Week to coincide with National Voter Registration Day
- Social media account takeovers of main U-M and school/college accounts to expand messaging around student voter registration
- Promote voter registration via digital signage, texting platform and social media

October

- Host City Clerk satellite offices in campus libraries to register students
- Engage students in the Presidential Debate to be hosted at U-M via social media platforms and possible in-person voter registration events
- Promote Early Voting Day

November

- Continue to publicize campus polling locations and voter registration opportunities via social media, all-campus emails and the GoVote website
- Election Day will serve as our final push for GOTV messaging on social media, in campus buildings and on campus transportation. In-person events and information tables will be determined in accordance with the most up-to-date public health guidance.

Reporting

The University will make this action plan public via the Ginsberg Center's webpage and will incorporate benchmarking into the quarterly Big Ten Voting Challenge reports which are shared internally with our Executive Officers.

The data used to inform this plan is available via our 2018 NSLVE report, and we will also make our 2020 report publicly available.

Evaluation

NSLVE data will be made available in the summer of 2021 and will be used to evaluate the University's growth in student voter registration and turnout.

The Big Ten Voting Challenge will again result in two winners in 2020: the campus with the greatest overall student voter turnout, and the campus with the greatest increase in student voter turnout, from the 2014 midterm elections. NSLVE data will be used to determine the two winning schools and will serve as a public form of evaluation of our efforts.