

MARYLAND
INSTITUTE
COLLEGE
OF ART

M | I | C / A

ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge

ACTION PLAN

FEBRUARY, 2020

I. Executive Summary

BACKGROUND

Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA) aspires to engage students in practices of critical thinking and action-based inquiry that prepares them to lead their lives as engaged creative citizens and professionals with the tools necessary to create and lead social change.

While the College's work is long-standing in this area, the modern version of MICA's democratic engagement began in 2015, when the College launched an effort to fundamentally rethink community engagement at MICA—from the place of civic learning within the college's mission and vision, to the programmatic and administrative structures to support a culture of engagement.

VOTER ACCESS INITIATIVE (VAI)

In 2016, a group of students formed a student interest group, the Political Engagement Club (now called MICA Organizers and Activists), and began working with local and national organizations aimed to increase student voter participation. The effort laid the foundation for MICA's Voter Access Initiative, a strategy to increase voter participation on campus. This initiative is now one piece of a broader and longer-term strategic plan to integrate civic learning and action, as well as democratic engagement, throughout the institution.

2020 ACTION PLAN

This plan, developed by the Voter Access Initiative at the Maryland Institute College of Art, reviews the numerous assets in civic learning and democratic engagement that exist at MICA. It also builds on our successes from FY19 and identifies areas for improvement. Our goals focus on establishing a one-MICA approach to civic learning; including all students in our efforts (specifically international and non-voting students); strengthening our voter registration, education, and turnout efforts to ensure 100% of eligible students vote; evolving our Voter Access Initiative to go beyond voting and towards inclusive civic learning and action; and, lastly, expanding efforts to reach local, regional, national, and international presence.

This plan serves as an organizing document to build and mobilize our efforts to create a culture of engagement. To implement the plan, VAI meets monthly to coordinate efforts. Between meetings, work group members take lead roles to execute our various strategies.

This plan is effective from January 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020.

II. Leadership

This work is led by a cross campus collaborative workgroup that meets monthly to identify, connect, and develop programming to increase civic learning and democratic engagement on campus. Originally prioritizing voter access efforts, the committee has expanded its goals to include an intentional, coordinated effort to embed civic engagement and activism into the DNA of MICA.

Committee members represent a variety of offices across campus, including Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, Undergraduate Studies, Strategic Communications, the Center for International Education, Strategic Initiatives, and MICA Organizers and Activists (a student organization). As the work evolves, committee members continue to invite additional representatives to the table.

While this initiative is a cross-campus collaboration, the Center for Creative Citizenship (CCC) is coordinating and overseeing this work, with a co-chair from the Center for Student Engagement. CCC is responsible for convening the group at least once a month, scheduling additional one-on-one meetings as needed, and documenting the work. CCC has three team members in this committee; in the event that one leaves, leadership will be continued by the other staff with support from the committee co-chair.



WORK GROUP MEMBERS

Erin Baynham, Social Media Manager
Strategic Communications

Yael Bloom ('21), Student Leader
MICA Organizers and Activists

David Bogen, Vice President & Provost
Academic Affairs

Emily Chappell, Public Relations Manager
Strategic Communications

Firmin DeBrabander, Faculty & Constitution Day Program Director
Humanistic Studies

Allison Fisher, Manager
Globe Press and Collection at MICA

Kevin Griffin Moreno, Director of Strategic Projects
Office of Strategic Initiatives

Annabelle Hayford ('20), Student Leader
MICA Organizers and Activists

Lauren B. Hill, Assistant Director of International Student Services
International Education

Karol Martinez-Doane, Director
Center for Student Engagement

Kate McGrain ('18), Coordinator
MICA Voter Access Initiative

Nick McKernan ('20), Student Leader
MICA Organizers and Activists

Abby Neyenhouse, Director
Center for Creative Citizenship

Mike Patterson, Vice President & Dean of Students
Student Affairs

Jenn Ramsdell, Assistant Director of Transitions
Center for Student Engagement

Nicolas Rodriguez Melo, Assistant Director of Community Arts
Center for Student Engagement

Hannah Shaw ('18), Coordinator
MICA Voter Access Initiative

Heather Slania, Director
MICA Decker Library

Becky Slogeris, Associate Director
MICA Center for Social Design

Colette Veasey-Cullors, Associate Dean
Design and Media

Michael Weiss, Associate Dean
Fine Arts and First Year Experience

Maddie Wolfe ('19), Social Designer
Mile 22 Associates / Ask Every Student

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

CROSS-CAMPUS COLLABORATION

Academic Affairs*
Center for Creative Citizenship*
Center for Identity & Inclusion
Center for Social Design*
Center for Student Engagement*
Community Art Collaborative
Decker Library*
Design and Media*
Digital Fabrication Studio
Events
Facilities
First Year Experience*
Fitness Center
Globe Collection & Press*
Graduate Studies
Graphic Design
Humanistic Studies
International Student Services*
MICA Political Engagement Club*
Office of Events
Painting
Postal and Print Services
Staff Enrichment Council
Strategic Communications*
Strategic Initiatives*
Center for Student Engagement*
Transportation & Operations Services

* Voter Access Initiative member

LOCAL

Baltimore Design School
Baltimore Collegetown
Baltimore Intercollegiate Alliance
Baltimore Jewelry Center
Baltimore Votest
Citizen Artist Baltimore
Greater Baltimore Cultural Alliance
League of Women Voters
Mt. Royal Recreation Center
Out for Justice
Represent Maryland
Wet City

NATIONAL

Alliance for Youth Organizing
Campus Compact
For Freedoms
National Voter Registration Day
Protest Banner Lending Library
Students Learn Students Votet
TurboVote
Vote Together
Young Invincible†
† Provided grant funding for VAI programming

III. Commitment

MICA's mission, strategic plan, and educational programming demonstrate the college's commitment to integrating civic learning and democratic engagement throughout the institution.

For many artists, being engaged means acting as agents of social change. This desire is expressed through our staff, faculty, and active student participation in the many pan-institutional initiatives shaped around community engagement, social design, and sustainability. We take pride in our long-standing commitment as an engaged and creative partner with the various communities, organizations, and publics of the City of Baltimore.

Over the past 5 years, MICA has worked intentionally and inclusively to craft new a mission, vision, tenets, institutional learning outcomes (ILOs), and core values for the school to better reflect and advance the role of MICA students in creating a more just and equitable world.

Mission: EMPOWER students to forge creative, purposeful lives and careers in a diverse and changing world. THRIVE with Baltimore. MAKE the world we imagine.

Vision: A just, sustainable, and joyful world activated and enriched by artists, designers, and educators who are valued for their leadership and imagination.

Tenets

- We assert the centrality of artists, designers, and educators in society.
- We shape culture.
- We flourish through collaboration.
- We embrace differences and champion equity.
- We invent through thoughtful disruption.
- We model a community of care.

ILOs

MICA students will understand the interconnectedness of local and global issues and be able to ethically engage a variety of cultural contexts.

MICA students will articulate how their values inform their creative practice.

MICA students will demonstrate an understanding of the importance of creative practices and their impact on community, society, and the world.

Core Values

Engagement: As an educational community, we also understand the importance of engagement with the larger community of Baltimore and support MICA's multifaceted efforts and initiatives to collaborate with the communities within our city.

Community: We also recognize that our community is a permeable one, strengthened and nourished by the relationships that connect MICA to the rest of Baltimore and the world.

Currently, the MICA community is developing its next strategic plan—a five-year action roadmap culminating in MICA's bicentennial in 2026. The strategic plan is the next step in translating the Mission and Vision into concrete action steps for realizing the collective goals of the campus community. This action plan is one activity outlined in the strategic plan, demonstrating MICA's commitment to institutionalizing civic learning and democratic engagement.

PROGRAMMING

MICA's institutional student learning outcomes define the attributes that make MICA graduates successful. Through a unique integration of creativity, community, and personal agency, MICA provides an educational experience that prepares graduates with the capacity to lead, to work with others and to make transformative contributions to the communities and society in which they will live and work.

CURRICULAR

The First Year Forum class serves all first-year students, and provides them with a transdisciplinary thematic studio and liberal arts experience, in which they investigate ways of being a creative person in today's world. Beyond the first year, the MICA undergraduate experience includes a significant number of studio- and studies-based courses that allow students to extend their civic learning and community engagement opportunities, including community partnered courses in Sculpture, Painting, Illustration, Graphic Design, Product Design, Gaming, Art History, and Ceramics.

Concentration in Sustainability and Social Practice—the first of its kind among art colleges—allows visual artists to connect their practice with sustainability, climate change, and social responsibility-issues and prepares them to become professionally engaged in the areas of sustainability and social practice as artists, designers, entrepreneurs, or scholars. Beginning in fall 2020, this will become a new major.

Four of MICA's graduate programs boast curricula that are intentionally intertwined with community partners to address pressing social issues:

- **MA in Social Design** connects students to project-based work with community partners. The program is driven by a deep commitment to social justice and equity and to increasing designers' awareness of the systemic power dynamics, policies and structures that enable social inequities and injustice to persist.
- **MFA in Community Arts** prepares artists to define their art practice as a means of civic empowerment, community organizing and development, activism, education, and more.
- **MA in Teaching** encourages students to examine the role of art education in schools, child development, and work in local Baltimore schools.
- **MFA in Curatorial Practice** prepares students to determine how curators will shape the cultural life of our global society. A hands-on curriculum balancing socially engaged practices with academic research in history and theory become the foundation for exhibitions that raise awareness, bridge societal gaps, and catalyze exchanges across various disciplines, both inside and outside the artworld.

CO-CURRICULAR

MICA's Center for Creative Citizenship offers grants to students, staff, and faculty, to support projects that are done jointly with a community member or organization. CCC hosts Community Art Collaborative (CAC), a program that places community artists in year-long residencies with nonprofits, schools, and community centers in Baltimore City. The work of CAC member artists provides children, youth, and adults with the benefits of after-school arts-based learning experiences and strengthens neighborhoods through community art projects.

In addition, the Community Art and Service program in the Center for Student Engagement provides students opportunities to get involved in the Baltimore community in varying levels of engagement, volunteerism, and service.

MICA hosts many events and speakers to foster dialogue and education on current and relevant issues—at local, national, and international levels. Most notably, Constitution Day, celebrated every year, continues the College's tradition of leadership in raising and exploring the relationships between the arts, education, and the pressing social, cultural and political issues of our time and world today. Established in 2005, Constitution Day has evolved into a two-day symposium that is open to the public and includes panels and commentary on contemporary issues in politics, government, civic engagement, and activism.

Students have organized and led several voter registration campaigns (Rock the Vote, "Don't You Want To," National Voting Campaign, and National Voter Registration Day).

IV. Landscape

At MICA, students are active members of the campus community as well as engaged citizens of MICA’s home, Baltimore City.

CLIMATE

Through a variety of clubs, campus events, disciplines, and grant opportunities, MICA students get involved—on and off campus—with issues that matter to them.

Student interest groups:

- Student Voice Association & student governance
- MICA Organizers and Activists
- Students of Sustainability
- March For Our Lives (MICA Chapter)
- 10+ identity based groups

In addition, in the current academic year students have been active in responding to current events. MICA students organized an event with the Global Climate Strike on 9/20/19, attracting over 200 students, staff, faculty and community members. A new campus initiative, Global Connections, creates space for dialogue among international students. MICA’s Day of Service in October engaged over 100 MICA stakeholders serving at numerous sites around Baltimore.

STUDENT DATA

VAI team has worked with the student records office to collect students-by-state data. Because election deadlines and information vary by state, VAI identified the top 12 states represented on campus to provide targeted emails and communications related to those states and their particular voter deadlines.

STATE	# GRAD	# UNDERGRAD	TOTAL
MD	144	392	536
NY	28	103	131
NJ	11	92	103
CA	38	61	99
PA	18	79	97
VA	31	65	96
FL	14	74	88
TX	13	55	68
NC	6	36	42
IL	7	28	35
DC	21	11	32
MA	9	23	32

25% of students are Maryland residents; it is critical that we share important information about local races. Plus, many more students are interested in voting locally. Our team will provide information and support about how to register to vote in Maryland.

25% of our student population are international and have interests and investments in their home countries. VAI is working with International Studies and Center for Identity and Inclusion to be inclusive and responsive to the needs of these students, outside of the US elections cycles.

VOTER ENGAGEMENT DATA

Throughout fall 2018, the Voter Access Initiative generated excitement for the midterm elections and civic involvement in the MICA community. With a coordinated, cross-campus effort, VAI developed and promoted engaging programming for students, staff, and faculty.

Leading up to the 2018 midterm elections, VAI coordinated or promoted 11 events including opportunities for participants to share new ideas.

One method of evaluating voter engagement is through partnering with the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement report (NSLVE).

In the last presidential election in 2016, 86.7% of eligible students at MICA were registered to vote and 65.7% of those registered actually voted. Our overall voting rate in 2016 was 56.8% which was 6.4 points higher than the national average. In 2016, 30% voted by absentee ballot, 12.1% voted early, 6.7% voted by mail, and 34.7% voted in-person on Election Day. This breakdown was similar to our 2018 Midterm data (28.1%, 12.6%, 8.6%, and 37.7% respectively).

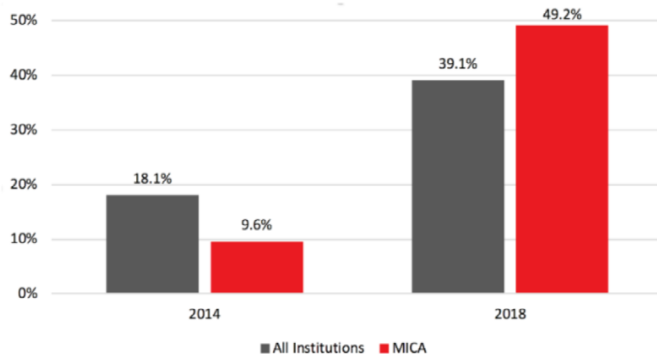
Registration rate of eligible voters was 95.2%, an increase of 26.6 points from 2014 and 10 points higher than the national average.

In 2016 and 2018, voter turnout was nearly the same across undergraduate and graduate students. Among undergraduate students, voter turnout was lower for First Year and Sophomore students when compared to Upper-level students. Therefore, we will target underclassmen at new student orientations and sophomore convocation.

There is a large gap in voter registration and voter turnout; this year we will specifically focus on improving voter turnout rates.

Leaders of the Voter Access Initiative are mindful that nearly 25% of the student population are not eligible to vote in U.S. elections. MICA recognizes that voting is not the only way to measure civic engagement on campus. Accordingly, the work group intends the Voter Access Initiative to be the launch of a more integrated and sustainable approach to embed civic action throughout the institution.

**Voting Rate (Voter Turnout)
2014 & 2018 Midterm Elections**



In 2018, our first year participating in the ALL IN challenge, and our first with a cross-campus collaborative effort, MICA voter participation increased 39.6 percentage points from the 2014 midterm elections. This change joined the national trend—nationally, voter turnout reached 39.1%, a 21 point increase from 2014 and the highest turnout for a midterm since 1914 (United States Elections Project).

ADDITIONAL ASSETS

MICA ASSETS + INITIATIVES

Natural Dye Project: The Baltimore Natural Dye Initiative is a multi-agency project that aims to explore the cultural and economic impacts of growing and using natural dyes in our region. The project brings together a diverse network of collaborators and funding partners and is supported by the Maryland Department of Commerce and the Maryland State Arts Council. The project establishes a dye farm at Parks & People Foundation and employs two part-time farmers in order to develop local knowledge related to the growing, processing and use of natural dyes. MICA's participation supports collaboration with local designers, artists, and businesses, intercultural exchange through visiting artists and lecturers, and experiential learning opportunities through an additional natural dye garden at Hidden Harvest, an urban farm in Greenmount West.

Globe Press: MICA acquired this historical press in 2012 and now utilizes it as a “living archive” for teaching traditional print and poster-making and its relationship to political and cultural communication. Globe has been central to many of MICA's voter turnout efforts through the creation of posters, lawn signs, and other public communications collateral using the iconic colors and designs of Globe.



LOCAL INITIATIVES

Baltimore Collegetown Civic Engagement: Meeting of Baltimore-area universities that are all working on civic engagement and voter education efforts on their respective campus.

Baltimore Votes: “The Baltimore Votes coalition is dedicated to providing everyone in Baltimore, without prejudice or bias the information and motivation they need to engage in elections.”

Citizen Artist Baltimore (CAB): “An advocacy effort to build community among, and mobilize thousands of voices within Baltimore City’s creative communities...Through arts and cultural organizing [they] seek to build and connect communities to improve quality of life for all residents and exercise political change at the city level and beyond.”

NATIONAL INITIATIVES

ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge: “A national awards program. By recognizing colleges and universities for their commitment to increasing student voting rates, the Challenge encourages higher education institutions to help students form the habits of active and informed citizenship, make democratic participation a core value on their campus, and cultivate generations of engaged citizens who are essential to a healthy democracy.”

Ask Every Student: “A project of the National Resource Consortium on Full Student Voter Participation, seeks to create research-backed processes, systems, and tools to answer that question. [They’ve] found that the key to reaching full student voter participation comes down to accessing a few minutes of individualized focus from every student on campus to prepare them to confidently navigate the democratic process.”

Campus Compact: “A national coalition of 1,000+ colleges and universities committed to the public purposes of higher education. [They] build democracy through civic education and community development.” MICA is part of Campus Compact Mid-Atlantic, and we participate in the SAGE network, as well as regional and national meetings. We host a full-time AmeriCorps VISTA volunteer and have had a series of Newman Civic Fellows through the Compact.

NATIONAL INITIATIVES CONT.

Creative Placemaking: In December 2019, MICA was awarded a grant from ArtPlace America to build the creative placemaking field through the development of an academic credential, scholarly research, and participation in a national network of higher ed institutions involved in this work. While there are many definitions of “creative placemaking,” in this context it refers to arts-based approaches to equitable community development and economic development in economically marginalized neighborhoods.

For Freedoms: “For Freedoms is a platform for creative civic engagement, discourse, and direct action...As a nexus between art, politics, commerce, and education, For Freedoms aims to inject anti-partisan, critical thinking that fine art requires into the political landscape through programming, exhibitions, and public artworks.”

National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement report (NSLVE): “[NSLVE] offers colleges and universities an opportunity to learn their student registration and voting rates and, for interested campuses, a closer examination of their campus climate for political learning and engagement, as well as correlations between specific student learning experiences and voting. More than 1,000 campuses across the country are enrolled in this first-of-its-kind study which provides us a research database that includes nearly half of all college students in the United States.”

Students Learn Students Vote Coalition: “[The coalition] promotes civic learning and engagement on campuses across the country by providing a series of key steps and information on best practices that institutions can use to create a more voter friendly campus.”

V. Goals

VISION

MICA thrives with Baltimore in cultivating a community that is informed and actively involved in civic engagement.

LONG-TERM GOALS

2026 Strategic Plan

Become a local and national model and resource for civic engagement in higher education.

- Known resource in Baltimore for nonpartisan voting access
- A collaborator in supporting a culture of civic engagement locally to realize 'Thrive with Baltimore'

Civic engagement and active voter participation are embedded within MICA at an Institutional level.

- Required course of choice on civic engagement
 - Grants and resources for alumni
-

MID-TERM GOALS

2024 presidential election

Realize full student voter participation (2024 Presidential Election)

- Voting Rate (Voter Turnout): 100% voting rate of eligible students
- Registration Rate: 100% student voter registration of eligible students
- Voting Rate of Registered Students: 100%

Expand efforts to reach local, regional, national and international presence

Share MICA's robust voter education resources locally and nationally

Integrate civic learning for ALL students

- Develop and utilize metrics to assess civic engagement (awareness, opportunities, and participation) beyond voting
- Provide training for faculty/staff on facilitating civic engagement
- Require student organizations to do a civic engagement training or activity
- Institution-wide understanding of MICA + civic engagement
- Highlight global political systems and government relevant to student body

SHORT-TERM GOALS
2020 Presidential Election
through Spring 2021

Increase student voter participation (2020 Presidential Election)

- Voting Rate (Voter Turnout): 70% voting rate of eligible students (increase from 49.2% in 2018 and 56.8% in 2016)
- Registration Rate: 100% student voter registration of eligible students (increase from 95.2% in 2018 and 86.4% in 2016)
- Voting Rate of Registered Students: 75% (increase from 51.7% in 2018 and 65.7% in 2016)

Expand efforts to reach local, regional, national, and international presence

- Work with Baltimore Public Schools to broaden voting outreach
- Develop series of public events around civic life

Strengthen voter education

- Provide voter team stipends for student leaders
- Create nonpartisan awareness about candidates and issues (i.e. installations, online resources, printouts, etc)
- Make voter information easily accessible to students (i.e. inside mica webpage)
- Start building a graphics template for voter education for primary and general elections (ie. candidate guides, ballot measure information, how to vote/important election information)
- MICA maintains a culture of voter education/celebration/support

Include ALL students

- Survey “political engagement” in our international student body
- Create additional opportunities and touch points to address current global events beyond voting
- Include civic engagement module in student orientations

SHORT-TERM GOALS CONT.

Implement a one-MICA approach to civic learning

- Incorporate civic engagement modules into First Year Experience (either through foundation course, program, and/or orientation)
- Map and facilitate connections among civic engagement-oriented groups and efforts on campus
- Form a teaching circle for faculty who incorporate civic engagement in their classes
- More fully align Constitution Day and Day of Action events with VAI work
- Center for Student Engagement establishes a required professional development workshop for France Merrick Fellows and Community Site Leaders
- Host a student summit - part professional development workshops and part activism (students co-plan)

NEAR-TERM ACTIONS

Spring 2020

Expand efforts to reach local, regional, national, and international presence

- Attend national conferences and share our work
- Collaborate with existing partners including For Freedoms and ALL IN Challenge
- Pilot support for Baltimore Public Schools voting outreach with Baltimore Design School
- Connect with institutional committee addressing community-engaged work
- Host Baltimore mayoral forum in partnership with Greater Baltimore Cultural Alliance

Evolve our voter access initiative

- Update/clarify work group roles, responsibilities, scope, and goals
- Decide on a new name that reflects the broader vision of this work (going beyond voting)

NEAR-TERM ACTIONS CONT.

Strengthen voter registration/education/turnout efforts

- Integrate TurboVote into existing student-faced programming (orientation, course-selection, Canvas interface)
- Incorporate key election dates into AY21 college calendar
- Provide voter registration trainings for students, staff, and faculty
- Connect SLSV and For Freedoms coalitions focused on civic learning + democratic engagement
- Research student touch points for information sharing at MICA
- Identify upcoming events and classes for announcements and/or tabling

Include ALL students

- Intentionally engage international students in programming
- Lead with and emphasize civic engagement in its various forms; make it clear that voting is one civic engagement tool among many
- Create census educational resources to share with MICA and the Baltimore community about the importance census completion

Establish a one-MICA approach to civic learning

- Create a definition of civic engagement for MICA
- Get pan-college civic engagement into MICA's 2026 Strategic Plan
- Create a clear mission for the Center for Creative Citizenship and the center's role in leading this initiative
- Create spaces for students and employees to process current events
- Begin planning to align Constitution Day and Day of Action events with VAI work
- Consider having a student civic engagement summit

VI. Strategy

DESIGN PRINCIPLES

We developed a set of design principles to ensure our initiative and its many parts reflect the needs, wants, and interests of the MICA community. We will refer to these principles as we build, implement, and evaluate our strategy.

INCLUSIVE. Create events, programs, and information that are relevant to all students, whether or not they are eligible to vote.

COLLABORATIVE. Maintain an interdisciplinary work group that includes student, staff, and community partners.

COMMUNITY-MINDED. Involve community partners and MICA neighbors in planning and implementation.

COLLECTIVELY ASSESSED. Provide opportunities for MICA community to give feedback on Voter Access Initiative and other opportunities; update programming to reflect that input.

SHORT-TERM TACTICS

VOTER REGISTRATION

TurboVote: MICA is an official partner of TurboVote, an online platform that makes registering to vote quick and easy. The site guides people through the processes required for registration and voting by mail, and sends reminders about deadlines and voting.

We include our TurboVote link in targeted social media and campus-wide email marketing campaigns. The link is on our website and one of our goals is to further integrate the platform into our student portals.

Tabling: We table at various events on campus including student orientations, Constitution Day, and National Voter Registration Day. We table in central areas on campus to reach both graduate and undergraduate students. At these tables we help people register to vote, answer questions about voting, guide students through TurboVote, and engage MICA community in completing civic engagement pledge cards (everyone—regardless of voting status—is invited to complete a pledge card).

Class Raps: MICA Organizers and Activists visit classes and provide a five minute overview about the importance of civic engagement and ways to get involved politically; they also hand out pledge cards.

National Voter Registration Day: MICA signed on as a partner of National Voter Registration Day (NVRD), a national effort to bring energy, excitement, and awareness to the voter registration process. VAI holds NVRD celebrations in three locations on campus to reach both undergraduate and graduate students. At the event, students have the opportunity to sign up with TurboVote, register to vote, and get answers to their questions about voting and the upcoming elections. Students enjoy democracy-themed decorations, a photo booth, button-making, and snacks.

Faculty Involvement: At the first full-faculty meeting in the fall, VAI shares information with faculty members to encourage their students to register to vote in the first weeks of classes.

Support Baltimore High Schools: MICA supports voter registration events at Baltimore Design School (BDS) to increase voting access for Baltimore high school students. This goal is to broaden outreach to other Baltimore high schools after piloting this program with BDS.

VOTER EDUCATION

See also: [Tabling](#), [Class Raps](#) and [National Voter Registration Day](#)

Flyers and Posters Distribution: A critical tactic of VAI is our collaboration with Globe Collection and Press at MICA. Founded in 1929, Globe was one of the nation's largest showcard printing companies, known for its bright colors and bold wooden type. Through a variety of printed materials, VAI and Globe created a unified brand with vibrant messages celebrating democracy. Below are several Globe projects worth highlighting:

- MICA Votes flyers contain important voting information geared towards students. It answers students most frequently asked questions, such as, "Should I vote in Baltimore or my hometown?" It also includes ways to get involved in the elections beyond voting. Flyers are updated and distributed during pertinent times throughout the year, including student orientations and school events.
- Globe vote posters call people to action and get out the vote. Over 1,200 posters were distributed and displayed around the city in AY19. Due to high demand and requests coming in from across the nation, Globe released digital versions of the posters under a Creative Commons license. Posters are free to download at mica.edu/vote, broadening the reach of the vibrant messages.
- International poster designs seek to include international members of the MICA community and foster cross-cultural conversations.
- Globe is organizing "Show of Hands." The goal is to get designers and printers across the country to submit a folio of pro-vote and democracy posters. Each person who submits will receive a folio of the collection to have an exhibition of their own.
- Globe is collaborating on a project to get the word out about House Bill 245 or The Student Voter Empowerment Act.

Speaking at Events: MICA Organizers and Activists attend events to discuss the importance of civic engagement and share upcoming opportunities for students to use their voice locally and nationally.

VOTER EDUCATION CONT.

Constitution Day: Established in 2005, Constitution Day continues the College's tradition of leadership in raising and exploring important political issues. There is a voter registration table with information about upcoming civic events. The fall 2019 topic was, "One Person, One Vote: The Challenge of American Democracy, Past and Present."

MICA Votes Website: We have a website that provides up-to-date information about upcoming elections. The site includes resources such as a state-by-state election guide, information about campaign issues, and how to check your voter registration.

Campus-wide Email: We send a mass email regarding voter information and registration before elections. The emails also include links to voting resources.

VOTER TURNOUT

See also: [Flyers and Posters Distribution and Campus-wide Email](#)

Absentee Ballot Party: Since MICA has a large population that votes out-of-state, MICA Organizers and Activists assist peers in completing absentee ballot applications and answers questions about the absentee ballot process.

Early Voting Shuttles: VAI organizes MICA shuttles to take students from campus to the nearest early voting location at the University of Maryland Baltimore.

Party at the Polls: MICA partners with #VoteTogether and Baltimore Votes to host Party at the Polls to celebrate democratic participation. VAI and MOA organize several walks or "parades" to the polls on election day to our nearest polling location. Pizza and other activities are provided on campus as students meet to walk to the polls together.

Social Media: We post important information regarding the elections and deadlines on our social media channels. We also share updates about civic engagement events on campus.

LONG-TERM STRATEGIES

STUDENT ACTIVISM

Encourage and promote student activism.

- Support identify- and activism-based student organizations and invite them to VAI workgroup meetings
- Provide trainings and resources to students:
 - Knowing the system and knowing how to advocate
 - Connecting and participating in local issues and protests
- Develop civic engagement fund to offer resources for students wanting to do this work
- Encourage transparency with information at all levels of the institution; offer power mapping workshop to more students
- Develop and promote opportunities for cross-student leadership relationship building and collaboration

VOLUNTEERISM

Demonstrate the impact and benefits of volunteering for both community partners and students

- Continue coordinating existing service in Baltimore:
 - Local Day of Service
 - Community Arts and Services program
 - Community Site Leaders (CSL) - semester long learning
 - France Merrick Fellowships
- Test and plan for larger scale efforts:
 - Plan additional days of service throughout the school year
 - Develop robust service-learning model to:
 - Reflect upon impact of volunteering, learning, and art and design
 - Provide exposure to unfamiliar and constructive opportunities
 - Develop series of dialogues connecting students, staff, and faculty who volunteer through student engagement and/or service-learning

RESOURCES

Leverage MICA resources to support civic engagement in Baltimore and throughout the country.

- Promote and utilize Globe Press as a communication tool for local partners
- Engage alumni network and AICAD (Association of Independent Colleges of Art and Design)
- Ensure MICA staff and faculty participate in local, national and international governing and leadership bodies (for non profit organizations, conferences, etc. Ex: Imagining America, Campus Compact, For Freedoms, Greater Baltimore Cultural Alliance, etc)
- Library is open to the public for art and design research
- Enhance community-engaged grants program; develop a centralized list of grant opportunities focused on civic and community engaged work for MICA students, staff, and faculty

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

- Connect MICA's voter education and turnout efforts with local Baltimore initiatives; share resources with and support community partners in their voter engagement efforts (ex: Baltimore Design School)
- Expand MICA's innovative and engaging public programming such as Constitution Day, Design Fest, and Think-a-thon, to include more partners; consider opportunities to further connect these events into a cohesive series
- Partner with local organizations, businesses, and neighbors to identify opportunities for collaboration, new programming and support of city-wide initiatives (ex: Baltimore Black Arts District Planning Committee)

EDUCATION

Discourse, public events,
and dialogue

- Coordinate regular programming that fosters dialogue among MICA students, staff, and faculty (ex: CSE conversations, Lunch and learns, Global Connections, etc.)
- Ensure events are shared with and open to the public
- Develop trainings for students, staff, and faculty to support community + civic-based engagement (ex: Safe Zone training, Social Design social literacy)
- Incorporate history of the Intersection of design + art and activism into course curriculum, and co-curricular programming (ex: First Year Forum; expand “History of Graphic Design” to be a requirement for all students)

ACADEMIC INITIATIVES

- Support and promote faculty-led and course-based initiatives through grants, committees, and course resources (example: Natural Dye Initiative, Finding Baltimore course, Select DFAB/BIOFAB programs).
- Survey faculty to see who/if they are doing work externally; develop inventory of courses that are working externally
- Convene faculty focus groups to learn about challenges, successes, and opportunities of course-based community-engaged work

TENTATIVE CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- January 27, 2020 – [Official Mass Email] About Special Primary Election for Maryland 7th Congressional District
- February 3, 2020 – [Official Mass Email] Reminder about Special Primary Election for Maryland 7th Congressional District
- February 4, 2020 – Special Primary Election for Maryland 7th Congressional District
- February 13, 2020 – Fossil Fuel Divestment Day
- February 18, 2020 – Last day to register to Vote (Regular) for Presidential Primary Election
- February 21, 2020 – MICA Organizers and Activists: Voting Team Workshop 1
- March 1, 2020 – Last day to register to Vote (Online) for Presidential Primary Election
- March 4, 2020 – [Official Mass Email] Early Primary Voting and Primary Voting
- March 17, 2020 – Presidential Primary Voting
- March 29, 2020 – Senior/Transfer Open House Tabling
- March 29 - April 1, 2020 – Compact20: The Promise of Full Democracy, Opportunity, Voice
- April 3-6, 2020 – Natural Dye Symposium
- April 5, 2020 – Sophomore/Junior Open House Tabling
- April 14, 2020 – Table at First Year Forum
- April 17, 2020 (tentative) – MICA Organizers and Activists: Census Party
- April 26, 2020 – Admitted Transfer Day Tabling
- May through August – New Student Orientation Voter Registration
- September 9, 2020 – [Official Mass Email] About Voter Registration, Events, and Resources
- September 17, 2020 – Constitution Day Event
- September 18, 2020 (tentative) – MICA Day of Action
- September 22, 2020 – National Voter Registration Day Event
- October 6, 2020 – Last day to register to Vote (Regular) for Presidential Election
- October 18, 2020 – Last day to register to vote (Online) for Presidential Election
- October 21, 2020 – [Official Mass Email] Early Voting and Election Day Voting
- October 24, 2020 – Vote Early Day Event
- November 3, 2020 – Election Day
- November 3, 2020 – Election Day Party at the Polls and Parade to the Polls

****UPDATE MARCH 2020:** Given recent MICA policies requiring undergraduate students to vacate on-campus housing and switching to remote learning as a result of COVID-19, the above calendar will need to be revised.

VII. Reporting

This plan will live within the Center for Creative Citizenship. In keeping with the institution's strategic planning process, the strategies and goals outlined in this document will be assessed quarterly by the Voter Access Initiative Work Group.

This plan will be publicly available on MICA's website and incorporated, as appropriate or requested, into reports to the MICA community (students, staff, faculty and external community members). We will also share the NSLVE data/report, updates, and information through the Center for Creative Citizenship and other MICA news outlets both internally and externally.

VIII. Evaluation

In addition to using the NSLVE reports to assess the impact of MICA's Voter Access Initiative, the work group will collect feedback throughout the campaign. Evaluation and feedback opportunities will be integrated into each event. And attendance will be tracked at each of the events.

Evaluations and attendance reports will be collected by the work group/Center for Creative Citizenship. Data will be reviewed and evaluated to note engagement, opinions, impact, and gaps in the campaign.

A comprehensive evaluation of the year and this action plan will be completed at the end of the Fall 2020 semester. Long-term comparisons to previous years data will be an indicator of success (increased attendance, improved voter turnout rates, etc.). Continuing on the success of our Fall Summary Report 2019, a new report will be created that evaluates our action plan, implementation, efforts and results. This report will be collaboratively created and publicly distributed.

Quantitative measures may include:

- Number of “check your voter registration” cards and “how to vote absentee” flyers distributed
- Number of students who register to vote or change their registration to Baltimore
- Number of events related to civic learning and democratic engagement
- Attendance at civic learning and democratic engagement events
- Number of students taken to the polls on Election Day (if appropriate)
- Number of reactions/engagement in social media takeovers
- Number of absentee ballot request forms and absentee ballots mailed by the University
- Other measures as they come available

Qualitative measures may include:

- Feedback from Voter Access Initiative workgroup, faculty, and staff that identify successful strategies and areas for improvement
- Success in implementing new strategies, such as securing reminders on Canvas, faculty/dean involvement or locating a polling place on campus
- Feedback from individuals working with targeted groups on success of reaching these groups

Maryland Institute College of Art VAI Covid-19 Strategies*

**Strategies are subject to change and are continually being updated as the situation is constantly changing.*

Strengthen Voter Registration / Voter Education / Voter Turnout Efforts

Campus-wide emails

- Special Election info with Globe posters
- Special Election Reminder
- Primary Election

MICA Votes Webpage

- Created page for Census
- Created section for Special Election
- Continue to update info for primary elections

Globe Graphics

- Special Election Posters and Social Media Graphics
- Partnered with Baltimore Votes and Black Girls Vote on Party at the Mailbox for the Maryland Primary Election
- I Voted graphics
- Primary Election

Webinars

- Why it's important to vote in the primary election (idea)
- Vote by mail 101 (idea)
- Compact20 Virtual Conference with Campus Compact - MICA co-facilitated the session, "Paving a path to the polls: Overcoming Process Barriers through Student Voter Education"

TurboVote

- Integrate into existing student-faced programming (orientation, course-selection (registrar office), Canvas interface) - *Hannah*

AY21 college calendar

- Incorporate key election dates (constitution day, NVRD) into AY21 college calendar (christine peterson-academic calendar; Jon Lipitz-goldenrod) - *Kate*

Joined Ask Every Student as a CoDesigner Campus

- Ask Every Student is a non-partisan program for higher education institutions to scale, apply, and implement voter registration strategies that reach every student on campus.
- Ask Every Student uses the framework that full student voter participation comes from integrating person-to-person voter registration into existing processes, such as orientation or classes that reach all students. Every campus has different challenges, opportunities, and context to create a program that asks every student about their democratic engagement plan.
- Applied to be a co-designer campus

Other ideas

- **Animation videos** about how to vote
- **Canvas Commons** - Class raps could become a module in the Commons that teachers could include in their course
- **Canvas Course** - Create a voter registration training course in Canvas,
- **New MICA App** - Coordinate with Strategic Communications about inserting voter information and announcements into the new campus app
- **Alternatives to Tabling at events** - Tabling could be an announcement during an event, if an email or communication is sent before or after an event we could add a line about voter registration/information,
 - Zoom background or slide with QR code and/or link to voter information
- **Virtual voting support drop-in hours**
 - Who is staffing?
 - How do we share this with the campus/get the word out
- **Live and recorded videos on IG** - Q+A with Maddie, MOA, other activists and organizers on IG (combination of live and recorded video content) engagement is higher when it is a student or alum in the video

Establish a One-MICA Approach to Civic Learning

Webinar about how to be civically involved during covid

- Maddie led one wwe of 4/6 to small group of students

Statement of Theme for Academic Year 2021:

- The thematic focus for Mixed Media for AY2021 will be “Rights and Wrongs: Liberty, Democracy, and the Struggle for Human Rights.” This theme will/can be explored from a range of perspectives, including the the history of race in America and the black lives matter movement, women’s suffrage and the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment, immigrant rights, public health vs. individual liberty, voter rights and voter access, freedom of speech and the arts

Create new paid opportunities for students

Community Art and Service (CAS)

- Due to COVID, students in the CAS program may be able to work on Voter Engagement as part of their work assignments.

Virtual Voting Ambassadors

- Creating compensated positions for additional student leaders would assist us in responding to student concerns that more students need to be included in this work and that they must be compensated for their time. Some of our most effective 2018 efforts were student led. With all of our events shifting to in-person and online, we need to double our efforts to make this possible. We need to support equitable funding so that students don’t have to choose between doing this work or working elsewhere.

Student Designer stipends

- As we work to re-create our past efforts into virtual space and experiment with new and creative ways to reach students, we will create a fund to pay students for their labor in designing various aspects of our voter access materials. To ensure the sustainability and our value of centering equity, we must understand the absolute need to compensate our students in this work, especially now as all artists and designers have been disproportionately impacted by the economic impacts of COVID-19.

Flexible funding through micro-grants

- To support student organizations on campus like our MICA Organizers and Activists club that engage in voter access work so they can be responsive to the evolving needs from and for students as we prepare for the 2020 election engagement this fall.

Voter Education materials/collateral

Globe Collection and Press Voting materials, print and virtual

- During the fall 2018 midterms Voter Access Initiative efforts, we were able to tangibly understand the impact these resources had on engaging all of our students in the election cycle. We were able to print and distribute over 1,200 Globe voting posters including over 200 to various MICA offices and departments and 450 to MICA community members. The print posters were in such demand that we were able to respond by allowing for [free downloadable links on our website](#) for individuals to print or distribute digitally. We would like to further expand on this effort this year in both printing, pervasive online sharing and a direct mailing to every student with voter information on one side and a Globe poster on the other.

New virtual voter registration and education materials

- These are needing to be created in order for us to reach the goal of interacting with every eligible student before election day. We also know from our students that it is imperative that we stretch our creativity in new modes of reaching students given the screen and online platform fatigue everyone has experienced over the past months. Some planned and experimental virtual components include:
 - Voter registration video to be a part of an online Orientation course in Canvas for new students
 - MICA Minecraft virtual 'Party to the Polls'
 - Short Voting 101 animations in the spirit of Schoolhouse Rock (We have some preliminary interest in collaborating with CalArts music students to support this effort.)
 - RA and Student Leaders online voter registration training module
 - Targeted state by state campus-wide emails to update on important state specific information
 - Expand voting information on MICA website and expand in new social media platforms
 - Create voting information in new MICA campus app to be implemented for fall 2020
 - Turbovote incorporated into more student facing platforms
 - In-person and virtual office hours for students to ask important voting questions 1:1
 - Virtual and in-person Voter Registration and Voter 101 trainings for student leaders
 - In the Classroom Virtual Class Raps
 - Plug and play faculty resources for online voter engagement curriculum infusion

VAI Covid-19 Calendar

April 16-21: Send out campus email (Special Election info with Globe posters)

April 21: (Special Election) Last day to register to vote

April 24: (Special Election) Last day to download ballot from State's website if you didn't already receive one

April 27: Campus email about the Special Election

April 28: (Special Election) Ballots must be postmarked by this date

May 31: Voter Friendly Campus Designation Action Plan Submission Due Date

May 12: Compact20 Virtual Conference with Campus Compact - MICA co-facilitated the session, "Paving a path to the polls: Overcoming Process Barriers through Student Voter Education"

June 2: Maryland Primary Election

Ongoing

May through August - New Student Orientation Voter Registration

Fall Semester

August

August 31, 2020 - First day of classes

September 9, 2020 - [Official Mass Email] About Voter Registration, Events, and Resources

September 17, 2020 - Constitution Day Event

September 18, 2020 (tentative) - MICA Day of Action

September 22, 2020 - National Voter Registration Day Event

October 6, 2020 - Last day to register to Vote (Regular) for Presidential Election

October 8, 2020 - Rights and Wrongs: 2020 Centennial of the 19th Amendment (Lauren Adams)

Speakers: Jaune Quick-To-See-Smith / Martha Jones

October 18, 2020 - Last day to register to vote (Online) for Presidential Election

October 21, 2020 - [Official Mass Email] Early Voting and Election Day Voting

October 24, 2020 - Vote Early Day Event

October 29, 2020 - Rights and Wrongs: 2020 Centennial of the 19th Amendment Part Two (Lauren Adams)

Speakers: Stacey Kirby / Karen Oliver

November 3, 2020 - Election Day

November 3, 2020 - Election Day Party at the Polls and Parade to the Polls

November 11, 2020 - Amalia Mesa Bains

Ken Krafchek / Community Arts MFA

January 31, 2021 - Voter Friendly Campus Reports Due