



General C
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Central Michigan University Campus Plan

About Central Michigan University

Founded in 1892, Central Michigan University (CMU) has evolved into a major, national university with over 24,000 students, more than 200 “top flight” undergraduate and graduate programs, and nearly 250,000 alumni worldwide.

CMU is a member of the NCAA Division I Mid-American Conference and is a classic, tight-knit college community located in the heart of central lower Michigan. Mount Pleasant offers a mix of small-town life complemented by university culture.

Executive Summary

While CMU still lacks any official, institutionalized civic engagement program (position and/or office) due to limited funding, a great deal has been accomplished in the past eight years toward increasing the number of CMU students who are registered, educated, and voting.

- 1) Our efforts were able to increase the percentage of CMU students who registered and voted in 2018, relative to the 2014 National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) data:

	2014	2018	2022
Registration Rate	58.8%	65.7%	
Voting Rate of Registered Students	27.4%	53.1%	
Voting Rate	16.4%	34.9%	

- 2) Our efforts were able to increase the percentage of CMU students who registered and voted in 2020, relative to the 2016 National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) data:

	2016	2020	2022
Registration Rate	74.0%	89.0%	
Voting Rate of Registered Students	59.7%	76.5%	
Voting Rate	44.2%	68.1%	

While the 2018 midterm data was slightly below the national average voting rate for all institutions, the 2020 presidential election data was slightly above the national average voting rate for all

institutions, and while not totally attributable to the Coalition's efforts, the CMU student voting rate more than doubled from 2014 to 2018 and raised 23.9% from 2016-2020.

3) It's important to understand that there is no formal institutional support for civic engagement at CMU. That is, the university does not support an office, an official position, or funding. Thus, what has been, is and is going to be accomplished is being done by, in essence, four entities and/or people this coming fall- most of these volunteers.

- a. Central Votes Coalition. Established in 2016, the Coalition includes students, faculty, staff and community members. The Coalition meets monthly to generate ideas, develop and implement plans, and disseminate information to its various constituents (listed later under Coalition members).
- b. Central Votes Registered Student Organization (RSO). The RSO, a small group of students (~10) meets weekly to plan activities, create graphics and maintain its Central Votes website.
- c. Central Civics. Central Civics is an initiative of the Mary Ellen Brandell Volunteer Center. The office employs a Voter Engagement Student Coordinator to organize and implement civic engagement educational activities.
- d. Two Campus Vote Project (CVP) Democracy Fellows. These two students will each develop a project to coordinate with and enhance the work the other entities are doing.

4) The steering committee which provides the overall direction of the work and coordinates the various activities consists of the two volunteer co-chairs of the Coalition, the president of the RSO, the Voter Engagement Student Coordinator of the Volunteer Center, and the two Democracy Fellows. This group meets biweekly to assure that our efforts are coordinated and accomplished. This group also annually reviews programmatic assessment to determine the impact of their efforts to write the following year's campus plan.

Responsibilities/Projects created and implemented by each of the four entities

- a. **Central Votes Coalition** will maintain its role of generating ideas from the representatives of the various aspects of the university, coordinating the work of the four entities, and disseminating information to its various constituents (listed later under Coalition members). The Coalition also provides updates to the Vice President for Student Affairs.
- b. **Central Votes Registered Student Organization (RSO) – reports to the staff advisor**
 - Create videos
 - Create graphics
 - Maintain the website
 - Get volunteers for the Fire Up the Vote event
 - Table at "Ten Tuesdays"
 - Debate watch party
 - Expand social media presence
- c. **Central Civics – reports to the Mary Ellen Brandell Volunteer Center (programmatic support ensures continuity)**
 - Citizenship Crash courses – ballot petitions, candidate panel, dinner table politics
 - Residence Life training
 - Voting Guide to Res Life desks and online

Civic Leaders Engagement conference
Vote Early Day event

d. Democracy Fellows – report to the Campus Vote Project

Presentations to specific majors and RSOs regarding why students should vote (premised on NSLVE data of less-voting constituencies)

A long-term goal is to institutionalize civic engagement at CMU through the creation of a new position and/or office, most likely within the Division of Student Affairs. It is clear that this goal has not yet been met due to funding concerns; however, the Coalition hopes to see implementation as soon as fiscally feasible. Creating a campus voting plan each year helps the Coalition to be able to justify this need to the institution by showing the capacity for effective results, yet resources are needed.

Strategies to Meet Our Long Term Goal

- a. Coalition members will meet with President Davies to advocate for an office, position and funding for student civic engagement.
- b. While the institution has not committed resources, such as funding or in a full-time position, the president of the university has historically sent campus-wide emails to all students, staff, and faculty encouraging students to be registered and vote in all elections. We will ask for a commitment to continue this practice, as well as ask University Communications to do the same. As well, the Division of Student Affairs has committed to supporting an on-campus early voting location to serve both the City of Mt. Pleasant and Union Township in future elections.
- c. Civic and global engagement are specifically named in the institution's value and vision statements; however, participating in the electoral process is not directly named. We will continue to encourage our academic partners to include voter information in their class syllabi and continue to ask our co-curricular partners to develop programming and education around voter engagement.

The three short-term goals for democratic engagement between now and December 2024 are:

1. Increase the percentage of CMU students who vote in the 2024 elections, relative to the 2020 NSLVE data (from 68.1% to over 80%).
2. Educate students about the changes in voting laws because of the passage of Prop 2 in Michigan in 2022.
3. Provide an on-campus early voting polling location for the 2024 elections (primary and general).
4. Develop curriculum for civic leaders' engagement conference to increase civic leadership and peer-to-peer support.

Core Leadership

Leadership members advocate for and support voter engagement efforts at Central Michigan University.

Symantha Dattilo, Assistant Director of the Mary Brandell Volunteer Center
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Dr. Norma J Bailey, Professor Emeritus, Teacher Education and Professional Development
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Carson Cooley, Undergraduate Junior, Democracy Fellow, President of Central Votes RSO
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Avery Harbison, Undergraduate Junior, Democracy Fellow
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Central Votes Coalition Members

These individuals are members of Central Votes Coalition and have committed to support voter engagement efforts at Central Michigan University. The Coalition consistently reaches out to new and underrepresented campus and community partners for participation.

Residence Life, Audrey Elworth
Director of Leadership Institute, Dan Gaken
Representative, Honors Program, Zach Evans
Vice President, Division of Student Affairs, Reneé Watson
SGA Representative, Christian Dunn
League of Women Voters Mt. Pleasant, Theresa Turner
Director of Volunteer Center, Erica Johnson
City Clerk of Mt. Pleasant, Heather Bouck
Director of Diversity Education, Nikita Murry
Central Votes RSO Advisor, Erica Johnson
Representative, MidMichigan College, XXXXXXX
Assistant Director Student Leadership Athletics, Travis Downing
Representative, Greek Life, Molly Schuneman
Representative, Central Life, Regan Foster
College of Health Professions, Representative, Jodi Fisher
College of the Arts and Media, XXXXXXX
College of Medicine, Judy Idema
College of Business Administration, Evelyn Smith
College of Education and Human Services, Jeff Angera
College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, Andrew Wehrman
College of Science and Engineering, Greg Colores
CVP Michigan Coordinator, Landon Myers
UComm Representative, Emily Houde
ACLU Representative, Izabella Silva

As current members move on from the institution or their position, the Coalition works with that individual to identify a new representative from their respective area to serve on the Coalition.

Central Votes Strategies

“Ten Tuesdays” Campaign

We will be utilizing a “Ten Tuesdays” campaign to engage our students during every election season. These Ten Tuesdays will be woven into all activities to civically engage our students this year:

- What is the 2022 Election?
- Why is voting important?
- How to register to vote
- Where do I vote and get absentee information?
- How do I educate myself?
- Get to know the ballot
- Not registered? Still time!
- Ensure absentee ballot is in; track your ballot
- Week before the election, track your ballot
- Election Day! Can I still register and vote in Mt. Pleasant?

In order to assure that conversations regarding these topics occur on schedule, the Ten Tuesdays are built into the Residential Life curriculum, and, as well, we will work with various campus partners, such as Athletics and Greek Life, to create similar outcomes.

Civic Leaders Engagement Conference

Recognizing the need to develop greater capacity for student leadership in civic engagement, we aim to develop a curriculum designed to train student leaders in best practices to increase student voter participation.

The following specific activities will be used to accomplish the Central Votes goals (above) aimed at increasing voter registration, voter education, voting rates and voter advocacy.

VOTER REGISTRATION

1. *Freshman and Transfer Orientation*

- a. Create and send out electronic messages to all incoming students and parents, both in state and out of state, to encourage them to register to vote prior to attending CMU.
- b. Train all Orientation Mentors regarding how to register students to vote, and FAQs from incoming students.

2. *Leadership Safari and IMPACT*

Safari provides an opportunity for both freshman and transfer students to learn how to be academically successful at CMU. IMPACT provides an opportunity for both freshman and transfer students of color to learn how to be academically successful at CMU. Both Safari and IMPACT participants join the on-campus community one week early, allowing them to become acclimated to

the college environment. More than 1,100 new CMU students attend Leadership Safari and IMPACT each year.

- a. Submit a half page informative advertisement that will be featured in the Leadership Safari and IMPACT Handbooks.
- b. Central Votes students speak to Safari and IMPACT participants regarding the importance of registering to vote and voter engagement.
- c. Create a 2024 Student Voting Guide to be used by Safari and IMPACT guides, residence hall advisors, and at tabling events to provide face-to-face information to students about reasons to vote, voter registration and absentee ballots, key dates, and frequently asked questions.
- d. Speak to all Safari and IMPACT guides, providing them with talking points about voter registration and voter engagement to share with their Safari and IMPACT participants.
- e. Table and register students to vote at the Safari and IMPACT registration tables as well as at the Organizations Fair.

3. *General Campus Population*

- a. Pass out voter information materials and recruit new student members for the on-campus registered student organization (RSO), Central Votes, at CMU's Main Stage event. This event is a fair where all student organizations can table to recruit new members.
- b. Provide class syllabus language regarding voter registration and voting that can be added to the bank of information that faculty can use at the end of their syllabi.

4. *National Voter Registration Day (September 17)*

- a. Host a Fire Up the Vote event on CMU's campus to celebrate Voter Registration Day and get students registered to vote.
- b. The event will include activities such as the following: music, voter trivia booth, checking student registration, absentee ballot applications, etc.

5. *Campus Wide Email(s)*

- a. Send out at least three emails in the fall semester to all students through the Office of Student Activities and Involvement that will include voter registration and absentee ballot information.
- b. Send out at least three emails in the fall semester to all students through UComm that will include voter registration, absentee ballot information and voting information.

6. *Registered Student Organizations (RSO) Social Media*

- a. Connect with all registered student organizations through the Office of Student Activities and Involvement and have them promote voter registration events on their social media.

7. *Tabling*

- a. Table every Tuesday with information outlined in our Ten Tuesdays campaign.
- b. Table in various academic buildings, especially those where NSLVE data indicates lower voter engagement.

8. *Apartment Complexes*

- a. Contact apartment complexes to include voter registration information in their welcome packets. **Sam going to check with CMU's lawyer.**

9. *Residence Life*

- a. Advertise voter registration through Residence Life and ensure that all Residence Life staff have information to distribute to their residents on how to register to vote.
- b. Provide training for all Residence Life paraprofessional staff to learn how to help students register to vote.
- c. Every Tuesday post our Ten Tuesdays posters and send a message to every Resident Assistant (RA) to disseminate the information to their students.

10. *Public Relations (PR)*

- a. Collaborate with student groups and Coalition members with comparable interests to encourage them to repost Central Votes social media posts on their social media pages.
- b. Utilize the following public relations strategies, supported by our College Champions:
 - i. Digital TV screens around CMU's Campus
 - ii. Department Social Media
 - iii. Mass emails to the campus population
- c. Asking professors to promote voting information materials on Facebook pages and Blackboard shells.

11. *Out of State Voting Information*

- a. Develop and disseminate material that contains information for out-of-state students on how they can register to vote, utilizing state guides.
- b. Increase efforts to campus partners who interact with large numbers of out of state students such as Athletics.

12. *Students Studying Abroad*

- a. Provide voting information to the Study Abroad Office in a timely manner so that all students studying abroad during any semester (or summer) know what they need to do to register to vote and vote via an absentee ballot while out of the country.

13. *Special Student Populations*

- a. We will reach out to the Office of Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Queer Services, the Office of Multicultural Academic Student Services, the Native American Programs Office, and Students with Disability Services to determine what special considerations are necessary to engage these populations in registering to vote and then make efforts to provide these resources.
- b. Reach out to RSOs and Greek Life that represent students with minority backgrounds (i.e., Transcend, Asian Cultural Organization) about how they can be included and promote election engagement.

VOTER EDUCATION

1. *Apartment Complexes*

- a. Contact student apartment complexes to include voting information in their welcome packets. ?????

2. *Local Candidates Forum*

- a. Collaborate with CMU Student Government Association and/or the local League of Women Voters to help facilitate the organizations' annual local candidate forum.

3. *Why CMU Students Vote Video*

- a. Working with University Communications, update a video that utilizes student leaders and information that matters to student voters to demonstrate "Why CMU Students Vote."

4. *Voter Education Information available on various office and department websites*

- a. Utilize Central Votes members' contacts to post information in their various social media forums, including Facebook pages and Blackboard shells.

5. *Public Relations Strategies/Social Media*

- a. Collaborate with student groups with comparable interests and Coalition members and ask them to repost Central Votes social media posts.
- b. Utilize the following public relations strategies, supported by our College Champions:
 - i. Digital TV screens around CMU's Campus
 - ii. Department social media
 - iii. Mass emails to the campus population
- c. Asking professors to promote voting information materials on Facebook pages and Blackboard shells.

6. *Mainstage*

- a. Pass out voter information materials and recruit new student members for the Central Votes RSO at CMU's main stage event.

7. *Debate Watching Parties*

- a. Gather students together to watch various candidate debates and learn more about the candidates' issues and views. This will allow students to be more informed while voting.

8. *Tabling*

- a. Table every Tuesday with information outlined in our Ten Tuesdays campaign.
- b. Table in various academic buildings, especially those where NSLVE data indicates lower voter engagement.

9. CM LIFE

- a. Contact and collaborate with *Central Michigan Life*, the student run newspaper on CMU's campus. Coalition members will contact the staff of this paper and request that they post articles promoting Central Votes' mission of voter registration, education, turnout, and encouraging students to be voter advocates.

10. Out of State Voting Information

- a. Develop and disseminate material that contains information for out of state student on how they can register to vote.
- b. Increase efforts to campus partners who interact with large numbers of out of state students such as Athletics.

11. Special Student Populations

- a. We will reach out to the Office of Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Queer Services, the Office of Multicultural Academic Student Services, the Native American Programs Office, and Students with Disability Services to determine what special considerations are necessary to engage these populations in getting educated to vote and then make efforts to provide these resources.
- b. Reach out to RSOs and Greek Life that represent students with minority backgrounds (i.e., Transcend, Asian Cultural Organization) about how they can be included and promote election engagement.

12. Special Voter Education Activities

In addition to the regular activities that we engage in each year, the Central Civics area of the Mary Ellen Brandell Volunteer Center will provide the following:

- a. Citizenship Crash Courses, for example,
 - i. Primary 101-educating students about the basics of the primary and caucus system
 - ii. Dinner table politics- how to have cordial conversations about politics at the table
- b. Voting Guide for Resident Life- a thorough guide to help Resident Assistants and front desk staff be able to help students with voting information
- c. Civic Leaders Engagement Conference- offering a one-day conference with multiple sessions about voting and civic engagement topics

13. Prop 2 with Emphasis on Early Voting

- a. Provide education about the changes in Michigan's voting laws as a result of Prop 2's adoption in the 2022 midterm election.
- b. Since there will be an on-campus site for early voting, educate students about who can utilize it and the differences between early voting and absentee voting.

VOTER TURNOUT

1. Public Relations Strategies

- a. Collaborate with student groups and Coalition members with comparable interests and ask them to repost Central Votes social media posts. We will also include an Election Day countdown to remind students about the election dates.
- b. Utilize the following public relations strategies, supported by our College Champions:
 - i. Digital TV screens around CMU's Campus
 - ii. Department social media
 - iii. Mass emails to the campus population
- b. Asking professors to promote voting information materials on Facebook pages and Blackboard shells.

2. Excused Absence on Voting Day

- a. Remind the CMU Academic Senate of the resolution passed in September 2018 to allow students "excused absence" on voting days and to not hold exams or have projects or presentations due on those days.
- b. Collaborate with CMU to send out a reminder to all faculty requesting them to allow students to have excused absences on Election Day if they are leaving to vote and to not have exams or projects due on that day.

3. Rides to Polls

- a. Collaborate with the Isabella County Transportation Commission (IRide) to provide transportation to the various polling locations in the Mount Pleasant community.

4. Campus Wide Emails

- a. Send out at least three emails in the fall semester to all students through the Office of Student Activities and Involvement that will include voter registration and absentee ballot information.
- b. Send out at least three emails in the fall semester to all students through UComm that will include voter registration, absentee ballot information and voting information.

5. RSO's Send Reminders

- a. Collaborate with all registered student organizations and have them send out reminder emails to their members to either vote in person or send in an absentee ballot.

6. Out of State Voting Information

- a. Develop and disseminate material that contains information for out of state students on how they can vote.
- b. Increase efforts to campus partners who interact with large numbers of out of state students such as Athletics.

7. *Special Student Populations*

- a. We will reach out to the Office of Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Queer Services, the Office of Multicultural Academic Student Services, the Native American Programs Office, and Students with Disability Services to determine what special considerations are necessary to engage these populations turning out to vote and then make efforts to provide these resources.
- b. Reach out to RSOs and Greek Life that represent students with minority backgrounds (i.e., Transcend, Asian Cultural Organization) about how they can be included and promote election engagement.

8. *Vote Early Day event*

- a. Central Civics one-day event to answer questions about why students should vote early; offered in late October

9. *Prop 2 with Emphasis on Early Voting*

- a. Encourage students to utilize early voting opportunities whether registered in the Mt. Pleasant area or a home.
- b. Since there will be an on-campus site for early voting, educate students about who can utilize it and the differences between early voting and absentee voting.

VOTER ADVOCACY**1. *Central Votes RSO***

- a. Increase membership in the Central Votes RSO that corresponds to the mission of Central Votes Coalition.

2. *Student Workers at Polls*

- a. Encourage students to train to become Election Inspectors for the City of Mt. Pleasant or for Union Township or in the city/township where they will be voting if students are not on campus.
- b. Encourage students to train to become poll watchers at various polling locations in the Mount Pleasant community or for Union Township or in the city/township where they will be voting if students are not on campus.

3. *Attend RSO meetings to distribute information and materials*

- a. Attend various RSO meetings and distribute materials to the organization's members. For organization meetings at which representatives will not have the opportunity to speak, the Coalition will send them materials electronically.
- b. It is our goal to utilize participants in the Civic Leaders Engagement conference as trained presenters.

4. *RSO's Send Reminders*

- a. Collaborate with all registered student organizations and have them send out reminder emails and/or social media posts to their members about all aspects of the voting process.

5. Meetings with the President

- d. Coalition members will meet with President Davies to advocate for an office, position and funding for student civic engagement.
- e. While the institution has not committed resources, such as funding or in a full-time position, the president of the university has historically sent campus-wide emails to all students, staff, and faculty encouraging students to be registered and vote in all elections.
- f. Civic and global engagement are specifically named in the institution's value and vision statements; however, participating in the electoral process is not directly named.

TIMELINE

The full Coalition will meet monthly from August through December. Small working groups will be formed to plan the September 17 National Voter Registration Day and to prepare materials for the Election on November 5, 2024.

Classes for fall semester begin in late August, and the Coalition's efforts in the early fall will be focused on voter registration. Coalition members will participate in Leadership Safari, IMPACT, Freshman Welcome Week, pass out voter information materials at CMU's Mainstage event, and celebrate National Voter Registration Day on September 17 during the Coalition's *Fire Up the Vote* event with voting games and voter registration. As well, the Coalition will use a variety of other methods to assure as many CMU students as possible are registered to vote and know how to vote via an absentee ballot or in person (see plan for specifics).

In order to educate students about the candidates and issues in the various elections, the Coalition will support the local candidate forum, as well as provide resources for educating oneself about the candidates and issues. The Coalition will disseminate information about the process of voting via a variety of methods (see plan for specifics).

To help get out the vote, the Coalition will work with the Academic Senate to encourage faculty to encourage early voting when possible and to allow "excused absences" on Election Day and to not hold exams or have projects due on that day. The Coalition plans to utilize the local community transit system to provide rides to the polls. The Coalition will also arrange for CMU, as well as multiple RSOs, to send out voting reminder details.

Throughout the fall of 2024, the Coalition will regularly remind the CMU President of the importance of supporting an office and/or position dedicated to student civic engagement.

In January 2025, the Coalition will begin the process of determining which of its long-term goals should be accomplished first and create a plan for its continued work (see Appendix).

REPORTING

This plan will be shared with all Coalition members which will reach both on and off-campus stakeholders, such as Registered Student Organizations, campus leadership, and the local League of

Women Voters. Additionally, University Communications will utilize NSLVE data and campus programming successes to inform the public of CMU's commitment to student voter engagement.

EVALUATION

One primary measure of the Coalition's success will be to examine the results of the NSLVE data for CMU to measure the percentage of improvement in both voter registration and voter turnout, when compared to CMU's 2020 election results. This will measure the short-term goals #1-4.

Given that civic engagement is not institutionalized at CMU, NSLVE data continues to be the primary measure of our success. The members of the Coalition annually work to analyze how well we are making progress in reaching our short-term goals by always evaluating all our events for participation numbers and the effectiveness of our strategies. Additionally, campus partners perform both qualitative and quantitative assessment to measure student learning. This includes a full assessment plan for the Ten Tuesdays Campaign performed by Residence Life, which includes surveying both students and staff on the effectiveness of the education.

Institutionalizing civic engagement at CMU through the creation of a new position and/or office is also a critical measure of the Coalition's success. When this is achieved, the work of the Coalition will be to support and strengthen the civic participation of CMU's students. This will accomplish our long-term goal. Currently, CMU's measure for success continues to be designators such as the Voter Friendly Campus Designator and the MTV Partnership on Early Voting. However, the Coalition's primary goal, function and measure of success is whether we have provided students with the information they need to be lifelong engaged register voters.

Appendix

Central Votes Coalition Long-term Goals and Objectives (beyond January 2025)

- Develop and pass a city ordinance that landlords must provide voting information in all move-in packets.
- Work with the new office and/or position to develop structures and processes to continue the work of and coordination with Central Votes Coalition.
- Help a Mt. Pleasant High School senior develop a senior project for an end of the year/half day program for seniors regarding the voting process.
- Develop and implement a plan for face-to-face voter registration with all students (freshmen and transfer) who attend New Student Orientation.
- Develop and implement a process for in-class voter registration.
- Partner with IRide, the public transportation service of Isabella County, to have posters about voting on campus IRide buses.
- Develop “How To” videos
 - a. Central Civics will develop “how to” videos in following areas to help students understand how to vote and how to be an engaged citizen. The topics of the videos will be as follows:
 - i. How to register
 - ii. How to apply for an absentee ballot
 - iii. The process of voting
 - iv. How to locate polling station
 - v. What to bring to the polling station
 - vi. How to fill out the ballot

As of 03/13/2024