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**Central Michigan University Campus Plan**

**General Contact Information**

Central Michigan University

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**About Central Michigan University**

Founded in 1892, Central Michigan University (CMU) has evolved into a major, national university with nearly 27,000 students, approximately 50 remote locations in the U.S. and Canada, top-ranked online programs, and nearly 215,000 alumni worldwide.

CMU is a $480-million enterprise offering more than 200 academic programs at the undergraduate, master’s, specialist and doctoral levels. Academic excellence is found in programs that have been ranked among the best in the nation, such as neuroscience, sales, logistics, fashion merchandising and design, and online programs for undergraduates as well as the online MBA and online graduate education for teachers and school leaders. CMU complements its excellent academics with experiences outside the classroom – hands-on opportunities that enable students to find their potential and develop their ability to contribute to the world around them.

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. Home to 26,000 of Isabella County’s more than 70,000 residents, Mount Pleasant offers a mix of small-town life complemented by university culture.

**Overview**

While CMU still lacks any official, institutionalized civic engagement program, a great deal has been accomplished in the past two years toward increasing the number of CMU students who are registered, educated, and voting.

1. A Central Votes Coalition was established, which includes students, faculty, staff, and community members. The Coalition met monthly to generate ideas, develop and implement plans, and disseminate information.
2. The Coalition was 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 |
| Registration Rate | 58.8% | 65.7% |
| Voting Rate of Registered Students | 27.4% | 53.1% |
| Voting Rate | 16.4% | 34.9% |

While still slightly below the national average voting rate for all institutions, and certainly not totally attributable to the Coalition’s efforts, the CMU student voting rate more than doubled.

1. While we don’t know if the Coalition reached its third initial goal, to register 85% of freshmen to vote, the voting rate of first year students did increase from 5.6% to 20.2%.
2. A cultural change at CMU has occurred. Whereas when we started, all initiative came from the two co-chairs and the Democracy Fellows, this spring and summer, other entities have reached out to collaborate/partner in our efforts. CMU University Communications (UComm), the primary communication tool of the university, reached out to us this spring to begin developing a communication plan. Both the Volunteer Center and Student Activities and Involvement (SAI) contacted us this spring to determine how they could support our efforts for student civic engagement. Additionally, we were contacted by the director of New Student Programs to set up a plan to face-to-face register every new student during Freshmen/Transfer Student Orientation.

The Coalition’s interest in earning the Voter Friendly Campus designation for CMU is to gain recognition for the good work being done; but more importantly, the Coalition aims to use the support of the Campus Vote Project to enhance the democratic engagement of CMU students, particularly related to voting and participation in the civic life of their communities. The three short-term goals for democratic engagement between now and December 2020 are:

1. Institutionalize civic engagement at CMU through the creation of a new position and/or office.
2. Expand the Coalition’s work to increase the percentage of CMU students who register and vote in the 2020 state and national elections, relative to the 2016 NSLVE data.
3. Develop new opportunities to educate CMU students (both current and incoming) about the significant changes to Michigan voting laws so that they can better participate in the 2020 elections.

**Core Leadership**

*Leadership members advocate for support of voter engagement efforts of the Coalition to the academic divisions and student affairs division. They are committed to seeking financial support for these efforts until a new position and/or office is established.*

Dr. Jodi Brookins-Fisher, Professor, School of Health Sciences

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**Central Votes Coalition Members**

*These individuals have committed to support voter engagement efforts at Central Michigan University. The Coalition meets monthly.*

Director of Residence Life, Kathleen Gardner  
Assistant Dean College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, Cherie Strachan  
Director of Leadership Institute, Dan Gaken

Assistant Director of Honors Program, Judy Idema

Chair of Mt. Pleasant Area Diversity Group, Ulana Klymyshyn

Executive Director of Student Affairs, Shawn Holtgreive

SGA President, Katie Prebelich

League of Women Voters Mt. Pleasant, Theresa Turner

Assistant Director of Volunteer Center, Samantha Misale

City Clerk of Mt. Pleasant, Jeremy Howard

Chief Diversity Officer of CMU, A. T. Miller

Director of CEEP, Ellen Wehrman

CEEP Fellow

Central Votes RSO Advisor, Jared Halter

Organizer NextGen Michigan, Kristin Tencza

College of Health Professions, Mark Lehman

College of the Arts and Media, Shelly Hinck

College of Medicine, Charmica Abinojar

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

**Central Votes Coalition Goals for Democratic Engagement**

***Short-term Goals for between now and December of 2020***

1. Institutionalize civic engagement at CMU through the creation of a new position and/or office.
2. Expand the Coalition’s work to increase the percentage of CMU students who will register and vote in the 2020 state and national elections relative to the 2016 NSLVE data.
3. Develop new opportunities to educate CMU students (both current and incoming) about the significant changes to Michigan voting laws so that they can better participate in the 2020 elections.

***Long-term Goals\* for after December of 2020***

1. Build and sustain a volunteer body for all civic engagement projects.
2. Maintain efforts with voter education and advocacy during the off-election years.

**\***See appendix for a complete list of long-term goals.

**Central Votes Coalition Strategies**

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

**VOTER REGISTRATION**

* 1. ***Freshman and Transfer Orientation***
     + 1. 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.
       2. Provide a pre-recorded session to go into the New Student YouTube channel or orientation page.
  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 2,000 new CMU students attend Leadership Safari and IMPACT each year.

* 1. Submit a half page informative advertisement that will be featured in the Leadership Safari and IMPACT Handbooks.
  2. Speak to Safari and IMPACT participants during various meetings regarding the importance of registering to vote and voter engagement.
  3. Create a 2020 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.
  4. Speak to all Safari and IMPACT guides, providing them with talking points about voter registration and voter engagement to share with their Safari participants
  5. Should Leadership Safari and IMPACT not occur in a face-to-face format, we will still create a 2020 Student Voting Guide that can be disseminated electronically to all new students, both freshmen and transfer, providing information to students about reasons to vote, voter registration and absentee ballots, key dates, and frequently asked questions.
  6. ***Freshman Welcome Week (First Week on Campus) (should CMU be having students on campus)***

Campus Life Orientation (CLO) are mandatory meetings that all freshman must attend during their first week on CMU’s Campus.

* 1. Give presentations to freshman about voter registration and voter engagement during these meetings.
  2. Participate in tabling events where student groups can connect with freshman students.

1. ***General Campus Population***
   1. 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.
   2. The Secretary of State (SOS) mobile office will be available on CMU’s campus to register students to vote face-to-face on September 21, 2020.
   3. Create and send out electronic messages to all students regarding the August 4 state primary – how to register online, how to educate themselves about the candidates, how to vote via an absentee ballot. (Can we do this if students are home?)
   4. Create 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.
2. ***National Voter Registration Day (coordinated with the September 21 SOS mobile office)*** 
   1. The SOS mobile office will be in available at the voter registration event to register students that are residents of the State of Michigan.
   2. Host a Fire Up the Vote event on CMU’s campus to celebrate Voter Registration Day and get students registered to vote.
   3. The event will include activities such as the following: lawn games, snacks, voter trivia booth, checking student registration, absentee ballot applications, etc.
   4. Should CMU not be in a face-to-face situation for National Voter Registration Day (which means the mobile SOS office will not be present), we will have CMU’s UComm send out a message to all students regarding voter registration, voting by mail and early voting. As well, we will use social media to promote this information.
3. ***Campus Wide Email(s)*** 
   * + 1. 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.
       2. Send out at least three emails in the fall semester to all students through UComm that will include voter registration and absentee ballot information.
4. ***Registered Student Organizations (RSO) Social Media*** 
   1. 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.
   2. Develop a training module for Registered Student Organization (RSO) leaders so that they can work with the members of their organizations regarding civic participation- registering to vote, voting by mail, and early voting.
5. ***Tabling (should CMU be having students on campus)***
   1. Participate in tabling events where members of the Coalition can speak to students in the CMU Bovee University Center and Park Library about the importance of registering to vote and how to register.
6. ***Apartment Complexes*** 
   1. Contact apartment complexes to include voter registration information in their welcome packets.
7. ***Residence Life (should CMU be having students on campus)***
   1. 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.
8. ***Public Relations (PR)***
9. Regularly utilize the various PR and Social Media elements of which the organization has access.
10. 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.
11. Utilize the following public relations strategies, supported by our College Champions:
    1. Digital TV screens around CMU’s Campus
    2. Department Social Media
    3. Mass emails to the campus population
12. Asking professors to promote voting information materials.
13. Should CMU not be in a face-to-face situation, we will create videos and/or other information that can be utilized in social media as well as sent out via our academic departments regarding registering to vote, voting by mail and early voting.
14. ***Out of State Voting Information***
    1. Develop and disseminate material that contains information for out-of-state students on how they can register to vote, utilizing the CVP state guides.
15. ***Students Studying Abroad (should CMU’s study abroad program be in effect)***
    1. 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.
16. **Special Student Populations**
    1. We will each 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.

**VOTER EDUCATION**

1. ***Speak Up Speak Out Forums (should CMU be having students on campus)***

Speak Up Speak Out Forums are student forums to discuss important events and topics in the news. Each forum is an opportunity for all participants to collaborate in thinking through the issues, identify problems, and consider solutions.

1. Develop materials and fact sheets to disperse at the Speak Up, Speak Out forums.
2. Have a representative speaking at the forums.

It is almost certain that the topics of at least some of the forums (2-3 in the fall semester) will be about the election.

1. ***Apartment Complexes***
2. Contact student apartment complexes to include voting information in their welcome packets.
3. ***Local Candidates Forum (should CMU be having students on campus)***
4. Collaborate with CMU Student Government Association to help facilitate the organization’s annual local candidate forum.
5. ***Develop “How To” videos***
6. Core leadership 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:
7. How to register
8. How to apply for an absentee ballot
9. The process of voting
10. How to locate polling station
11. What to bring to the polling station
12. How to fill out the ballot
13. Create videos featuring high-profile faculty and staff (professors, coaches, and deans encouraging participation and raise awareness of the need to register and vote. These videos will be disseminated on social media platforms: Instagram, Twitter, TikTok, Snapchat, and Facebook).
14. ***Why CMU Students Vote Video***
15. Update a video that utilizes student leaders and information that matters to student voters to demonstrate “Why CMU Students Vote.”
16. ***Voter Education Information available on various office and department websites***
17. Utilize Coalition members contacts to post information in their various social media forums, including Facebook pages and Blackboard shells.
18. ***Website***
19. Develop a website through CMU that can be linked to the University’s website that includes information on voting and how to be an engaged citizen.
20. ***Public Relations Strategies/ Social Media***
21. Regularly utilize the various PR and social media elements to which the Coalition has access.
22. Collaborate with student groups with comparable interests and Coalition members and ask them to repost Central Votes social media posts.
23. Utilize the following public relations strategies, supported by our College Champions:
    1. Digital TV screens around CMU’s Campus
    2. Department social media
    3. Mass emails to the campus population
24. Asking professors to promote voting information materials on Facebook pages and Blackboard shells.
25. Should CMU not be in a face-to-face situation, we will create videos and/or other information that can be utilized in social media as well as sent out via our academic departments regarding registering to vote, voting by mail and early voting.

1. ***Mainstage (should CMU be having students on campus)***

This event is a fair where all student organizations can table to recruit new members.

1. Pass out voter information materials and recruit new student members for the Central Votes RSO at CMU’s main stage event.
2. ***Mini Mainstage (should CMU be having students on campus)***

This event is similar to the Mainstage event; however, it gives student organizations another chance to table and recruit student members.

1. Pass out voter materials as well as grow the student group, Central Votes RSO.
2. ***Debate Watching Parties***
3. 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.
4. Should CMU not be in a face-to-face situation when these candidate debates occur, video-conferencing (Zoom, WebEx) will be utilized to facilitate these conversations with students.
5. ***Develop Materials to Make Available for Voter Registration Volunteers (should CMU be having students on campus)***
6. Develop materials for all volunteers who will be registering students to vote and/or informing them about the process of registering to vote.
7. ***Tabling (should CMU be having students on campus)***
8. Table on CMU’s campus. Organizations have the opportunity to table in CMU’s Bovee University Center and the Park Library. Coalition members will utilize this opportunity to provide voting information to students.
9. ***CM LIFE***
10. 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.
11. ***Out of State Voting Information***
12. Develop and disseminate material that contains information for out of state student on how they can register to vote.
13. **Special Student Populations**
    1. We will each 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.

**VOTER TURNOUT**

***1.Public Relations Strategies***

1. Regularly utilize the various PR and social media elements to which the Coalition has access.
2. Collaborate with student groups and Coalition members with comparable interests and ask them to repost Central Votes social media posts. The Coalition will also include an election day countdown to remind students about the election dates.
3. Utilize the following public relations strategies, supported by our College Champions:
   1. Digital TV screens around CMU’s Campus
   2. Department social media
   3. Mass emails to the campus population
4. Asking professors to promote voting information materials
5. ***Excused Absence on Voting Day (should CMU be having students on campus)***
   1. 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.
   2. 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.
6. ***Rides to Polls (should CMU be having students on campus)***
   1. Collaborate with the Isabella County Transportation Commission (iRide) to provide transportation to the various polling locations in the Mount Pleasant community.
7. ***University Reminder Email***
8. Arrange for three CMU-wide emails to be sent to all students with the following details:
9. Election deadlines
10. Election Day dates
11. ***March to the Polls (should CMU be having students on campus)***
12. Conduct an event where campus students who are registered to vote can march to the polling stations at Vowles Elementary and Fancher Elementary together on the November 3 election date.
13. ***RSO’s Send Reminders***
14. 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.
15. ***Out of State Voting Information*** 
    1. Develop and disseminate material that contains information for out of state students on how they can vote.
16. **Special Student Populations**
    1. We will each 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.

**STUDENTS AS VOTER ADVOCATES**

* + - 1. ***Central Votes RSO***
  1. Increase membership in the Central Votes RSO that corresponds to the mission of Central Votes Coalition.
     + 1. ***Student Workers at Polls***

1. 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 student are not on campus.
2. 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 student are not on campus.
   * + 1. ***Develop Materials to Make Available for Voter Registration Volunteers***
3. Develop materials for all volunteers who will be registering students to vote and/or informing them about the process of registering to vote.
   * + 1. ***Develop “How To” videos***
4. Core leadership 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:
5. How to register
6. How to apply for an absentee ballot
7. The process of voting
8. How to locate polling station
9. What to bring to the polling station
10. How to fill out the ballot
    * + 1. ***March to the Polls (should CMU be having students on campus)***
11. Conduct an event where campus students who are registered to vote can march to the polling stations at Vowles Elementary and Fancher Elementary together.
    * + 1. ***Attend RSO meetings to distribute information and materials (should CMU be having students on campus)***
12. 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.

***7. RSO’s Send Reminders***

1. Collaborate with all registered student organizations and have them send out reminder emails to their members about all aspects of the voting process.

**TIMELINE**

The full Coalition will meet monthly from February through May, once during the summer, and monthly August through December. Small working groups will be formed to plan the September 21 National Voter Registration Day and to prepare materials for the several elections in 2020.

Michigan will experience three significant elections this year – Presidential Primary on March 10, State Primary on August 4, and State General on November 3. As well, Michigan’s voting rules changed significantly as a result of the 2018 midterm election in the following areas: Registering up to Election Day, No Reason Absentee Voting, Early Voting by Absentee Ballot, Automatic Voter Registration, Online Voter Registration, and Straight Party Voting.

In the time period from the start of the spring semester (January 13) until the Presidential Primary on March 10, Coalition members educated students about the changes so that they could participate in the March 10 Presidential Primary and later in the August 4 State Primary. In addition, this information helped students determine where and how they would vote in elections, in that the spring break for CMU this year was March 9-13 and students will not be on campus for it or during the August 4 election.

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 sponsor a voter registration drive with the mobile Secretary of State on September 21 along with celebrating National Voter Registration Day during the Coalition’s Fire Up the Vote event with voting games and further 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 Speak Up Speak Out forums dealing with the elections and the local candidates forum, as well as provide resources for educating oneself about the candidates. 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 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 as well as organize Marches to the Polls for CMU’s on-campus students. The Coalition will also arrange for CMU, as well as multiple RSOs, to send out voting reminder details.

In January 2021, 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).

**MEASURES OF SUCCESS**

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 2016 election resulting. This will measure the outcome of Goals #2 and #3.

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 Goal #1.

**Appendix**

**Central Votes Coalition Long-term Goals and Objectives (beyond January 2021)**

* Develop and pass a city ordinance that landlords must provide voting information in all move- in packets.
* Partner with Mid Michigan College (MMC) on all voting advocacy and education initiatives.
* 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.
* Change Michigan voting laws to push for changing registration law about driver’s license and voter registration having to match.
* 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.
* Develop and implement a “Democracy 101” series or class.
* Partner with iRide, the public transportation service of Isabella County, to have posters about voting on campus iRide buses.

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