



Central Michigan University Campus Plan

General Contact Information

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About Central Michigan University

Founded in 1892, Central Michigan University (CMU) has evolved into a major, national university with over 13,000 students, 300 “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. 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 six 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
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
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, five 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. Three Campus Vote Project (CVP) Democracy Fellows. These three students will each develop a project to coordinate with and enhance the work the other entities are doing.
- e. A Leadership Advancement Scholar. This student is working with a staff person from Residence Life to develop a "Ten Tuesdays" program for an LDR independent study course, with emphasis on Residence Life, and she is coordinating her work with the other entities.

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, the three Democracy Fellows, and the Leadership Advancement Scholar. This group meets biweekly to assure that our efforts are coordinated and accomplished.

Responsibilities/Projects created and implemented by each of the five 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 five entities, and disseminating information to its various constituents (listed later under Coalition members).
- b. **Central Votes Registered Student Organization (RSO)**
 - 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

Citizenship Crash courses – ballot petitions, candidate panel, dinner table politics, community connection fair
Residence Life training
Voting Guide to Res Life desks and online
Media Literacy cell phone
Issue Day Civic Engagement conference
Satellite voting office last two weeks of October
Vote Early Day event

d. Democracy Fellows

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

e. Leadership Advancement Scholar

Create posters for each of our “Ten Tuesdays” to be placed on all residence life floors and main desks
Send out group chat messages with this information to each RA
Get on social media
On TV monitors in each academic building

The three short-term goals for democratic engagement between now and December 2022 are:

1. Institutionalize civic engagement at CMU through the creation of a new position and/or office.
2. Increase the percentage of CMU students who vote in the 2022 midterm elections, relative to the 2018 NSLVE data (from 34.1% to over 40%).
3. Educate students about the importance of voting to democracy, including other ways to be engaged citizens.

Core Leadership

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

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Dr. Norma J Bailey, Professor Emeritus, Teacher Education and Professional Development
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Katie Gibson, Undergraduate Junior, Democracy Fellow
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Hope Marie Delgado, Undergraduate Senior, Democracy Fellow
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Hadlee Rinn, Undergraduate junior, Leadership Advancement Scholar
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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.

Residence Life, Luanne Goffnett
Director of Leadership Institute, Dan Gaken
Student Representative from Honors Program, Lorena Morgan
Chair of Mt. Pleasant Area Diversity Group, Ulana Klymyshyn
Executive Director of Student Affairs, Shawn Holtgreive
SGA President, Taylor Idema
League of Women Voters Mt. Pleasant, Theresa Turner
Director of Volunteer Center, Erica Johnson
Assistant Director of Volunteer Center, Symantha Dattilo
City Clerk of Mt. Pleasant, Heather Bouck
Director of Diversity Education, Nikita Murry
Community Member, Ellen Wehrman
Central Votes RSO Advisor, Jared Halter
Representative, MidMichigan College
Sara Tisdale, Athletics
Representative, Greek Life
Aurora Abraham, Central Michigan Life Editor-in-Chief
College of Health Professions, Representative
College of the Arts and Media, Shelly Hinck
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

Central Votes Strategies

We will be utilizing a “Ten Tuesdays” campaign to engage our students. 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?

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 1,500 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 2022 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. *Freshman Welcome Week (First Week on Campus)*

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

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

4. *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.

5. *National Voter Registration Day (September 20)*

- 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.

6. *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.

7. *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.

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. *Apartment Complexes*

- a. Contact apartment complexes to include voter registration information in their welcome packets.

10. *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. Partner with CEEP to provide virtual 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.

11. *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.

12. *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.

13. *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.

14. *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.

15. *Podcast about Voting*

- a. Biweekly podcasts by CM Life

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 to help facilitate the organization's annual local candidate forum.

3. *Why CMU Students Vote Video*

- a. 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.

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
 - i. Ballot petitions- an explanation of the petitions on the ballot for the midterm election
 - ii. Candidate panel- local candidates will discuss their positions
 - iii. Dinner table politics- how to have cordial conversations about politics at the table
 - iv. Community connection fair- providing opportunities for students to connect with various aspects of the community
- 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. Issue Day Civic Engagement Conference- offering a one-day conference with multiple sessions about voting and civic engagement topics
- d. Media literacy cell phone handout- contains information about media literacy, reminders and resources

13. **Podcasts about Voting**

- a. Biweekly podcasts by CMLife

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
- c. 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.

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. *Satellite voting office*

- a. Two weeks before the Election
- b. Mt. Pleasant City Clerk on campus 2-3 days/week to help students register and/or get help with absentee balloting

10. *Podcasts about Voting*

- a. Biweekly podcasts by CMLife

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.

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*

- a. Coalition members will meet with President Davies to advocate for an office, position and funding for student civic engagement.

6. *Podcasts about Voting*

- a. Biweekly podcasts by CM Life

TIMELINE

The full Coalition will meet monthly from August through December. Small working groups will be formed to plan the September 20 National Voter Registration Day and to prepare materials for the Election on November 8, 2022.

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 20 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 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 2022, 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 2023, 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 2018 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 2023)

- 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.
- 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.
- Develop “How To” videos
 - a. 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:
 - 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