



ACTION PLAN

2024 - 2026



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Executive Summary

This 2024 Action Plan is intended to evaluate the James Madison Center for Civic Engagement's recent efforts, identify the Center's strengths and weaknesses, and set up the next years worth of planning for civic engagement.

This plan was developed by Kara Dillard, interim Executive Director of the Madison Center for Civic Engagement, and Amelia Stoner, Graduate Assistant and Senior Democracy Fellow.

This plan will be implemented on campus at James Madison University and in the surrounding communities of Rockingham County, the City of Harrisonburg, and with national and state partners.

This year, our goals will focus on...

1. Increasing voter registration and election turnout
2. Engaging off-campus students, athletics, Greek life, and Resident Assistants/Hall Directors
3. Improving the quality of voter education
4. Building better relationships with faculty

We predict that we will achieve these goals based on our continued support and commitment to data-driven evaluations of our various programs.

Implementation of this plan will be focused on several initiatives outlined in the Landscape and Goals sections and will take place over the next year, 2024-2025.

Strategy

Our strategy rests on the Dukes Vote team to enact these goals by continuing current effective strategies and implementing new ones. Dukes Vote will engage students by handing out t-shirts, facilitating classroom conversations about registration and ballot issues, continuing our Traveling Town Hall/candidate forums programming, Common Good Conversations, registering students to vote at campus outreach tables, engaging JMU faculty as voting champions, and so much more.

Leadership

The Madison Center for Civic Engagement is a high profile unit housed in the Office of the President. JMU president Jonathan Alger is committed to campus-wide voter initiatives and is a national leader in this work, having served as Board Chair of the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge.

The Madison Center is led by three full-time staff members and key part-time staff, including a post-graduate Democracy Fellow who focuses on marginalized and underrepresented groups, and a Post-Graduate Fellow who work on social media. Our office utilizes a Graduate Assistant and numerous undergraduate Democracy Fellows.

The Madison Center's leadership and staff:

Dr. Kara Dillard, Interim Executive Director

Logan Zeigler, Program Coordinator

Amelia Stoner, Graduate Assistant and Sr. Democracy Fellow

Gabriela Leija-Hernandez, Post-Graduate Democracy Fellow

Mia Mannix, Presidential Engagement Fellow

Danny George, NextGen Service Corps Coordinator

*The Madison Center is currently hiring for a full time interim Associate Director for the 2024-2025 year.

**Dr. David Kirkpatrick, the previous executive director, has a different role at the university. See p. 5 for more on this leadership transition.

Undergraduate Democracy Fellows:

Communications Democracy Fellows

Leia Surovell & Ai Vy Le

Campus Vote Project Democracy Fellows

Caroline Woodson, Adonis Ortiz, and Aiden Heitt

Democracy Fellows

Parker Boggs

Valeria Lopez-Postigo

Emma Niland

Reagan Polarek

Sophie Rossi

Annika Thompson

Mya Wilcox

Emma Sellers

JMU leadership in transition:

JMU is deeply committed to civic engagement and has established three full time faculty and staff lines dedicated to the Madison Center for Civic Engagement and an independent budget and private donation funds. The staff lines are independent of academic department utilization and are solely dedicated to the Madison Center. The operating budget and private donation funds are not a subset of an academic department but This protects JMU's campus voting initiatives from the whims of staffing change.

The Madison Center has experienced much organizational change since 2022. In the summer of 2022, the previous executive director and associate director left the program (one to return to full time faculty duties and the other to another university). JMU immediately hired a full time interim executive director, Dr. David Kirkpatrick and a full time interim associate director, Dr. Kara Dillard. The Center had a returning full time program coordinator, graduate student, and post-graduate fellow taking on the work of starting the campus' voting work in 2022 until Kirkpatrick and Dillard were hired.

Having established staff and faculty lines again proved helpful when Dr. Kirkpatrick was appointed Chief of Staff to President Alger. Dr. Dillard moved into the interim Executive Director role and the Center is actively hiring an interim associate director. In AY2024-2025, the Center will conduct a search for a full time executive director and interim associate director.

President Alger will be leaving JMU as of June 30, 2024 and an interim president will be assigned by the university's Board of Visitors. The Madison Center's staffing and financial independence will buffer it from changing priorities.

Leading JMU's Democracy Beyond Barriers:

The Madison Center is the campus leader in promoting voting to those from marginalized communities and in encouraging everyone, including those who do not have legal status in the U.S., to become informed and engaged residents on campus and in Harrisonburg. The Center actively partners with Scholars Latino Initiative, The Latin American, Latinx, and Caribbean Studies department, and Madison International to bring relevant informational sessions and programming to campus. Our post-graduate fellow, Gabby Leija-Hernandez has been instrumental in connecting with the immigrant and refugee populations on campus and in the community and encouraging civic engagement, even when people can't vote.

Internal Advisory Board

The Madison Center’s internal advisory board serves a key function in our student voter efforts. These faculty and staff serve as panelists for ballot informational events and events about overcoming barriers to voting and organizing sessions on election security for the community. Advisory board members also work with Madison Center staff on assessing campus-wide civic engagement efforts and have helped design the civic leadership minor. Our advisory board is key to our student voting efforts.

Ryan Alessi	School of Media Arts and Design
Dr. Ben Blankenship	Department of Psychology
Stephania Cervantes	Institute for Innovation in Health and Human Services, Scholars Latino Initiative
Dr. Michael Gubser	History Department
Dr. Dena Pastor	Department of Graduate Psychology
Dr. Emma Thacker	Department of Early, Elementary, and Reading Education
Dr. Cyril Uy II	Department of Religion

External Advisory Board

The Madison Center’s external advisory board meets twice per year and provides guidance and information on the Center’s key programming. In the past, the Board has committed funding to support hiring additional undergraduate Democracy Fellows, allowing the Center to pay students for their voting work on campus.

Matt Carr	Sheriff of Teton County, WY
Jamie Lockhart	Former National Director of Mission: Readiness
Elizabeth Vickrey Lodal	Virginia Board of Education
A. Raleigh Marshall	Premier Field Engineer at Microsoft
Arthur Moats	Former NFL Linebacker and Philanthropic
Mayor Deanna Reed	Mayor of Harrisonburg
Russ Reader, Advisory Board Chair	Tech and Branding Executive
Ian Simmons	Co-Founder and Principal of Blue Haven Initiative
Jennifer Park Stout	Vice President of Global Public Policy
Doug Trout	Managing Director at DRi Consulting

Commitment

Commitment from the University President:

Efforts to institutionalize civic engagement were made concrete in 2017 with the establishment of the James Madison Center for Civic Engagement, tying civic learning and democratic engagement to the core educational mission of the university. The Madison Center is responsible for the coordination, implementation, and facilitation of programming to embed political learning throughout the campus experience. The Madison Center enjoys a close relationship with JMU president Jonathan Alger, who has chaired the ALL IN Presidents Council, also received the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge Standout Campus President Award in 2019.

Commitment in JMU's strategic plan and priorities:

JMU's vision is "to be the national model for the engaged university: engaged with ideas and the world." For JMU, being the national model of an engaged university means committing to three facets: civic engagement, community engagement, and engaged learning. Goal 7B of JMU's strategic plan states:

The university builds the capacity to **institutionalize voter education** and engagement **as a year-round endeavor** supports the integration of civic learning in courses and academic programs and advances civic learning and democratic engagement opportunities across Virginia and the nation.

Civic engagement and voting is also embedded in the university's strategic priorities, Strategic Priority #5: Supporting the University's Engagement Vision. Metric 5D is "student voting rates will increase across general and midterm elections."

Strategic Priority Five
Supporting the University's Engagement Vision

Status	Metric	Description	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	Trend
✓	5A	Undergraduate students will participate in an average of five high impact practices by the time they graduate from JMU.	5.0	5.1	5.2	5.3		↗
◆	5B	Annually, at least 10% of undergraduate students will take coursework with a community engagement component or participate in community-based Federal Work Study roles.	10.8%	5.0%	6.9%	6.4%		↘
!	5C	Annually, at least 5% of students will enroll in internship-related for-credit courses.	5.0%	2.1%	3.3%	3.5%		↘
✓	5D	Student voting rates will increase across general and midterm elections.	Midterm Election 32.8%		General Election 74.6%			↗

Curricular Commitment:

JMU has made a strong commitment to anchoring civic engagement and voting into the curriculum. JMU's Board of Visitors just approved the new Civic Leadership minor. The minor will prepare students to become civic leaders in addressing today's most pressing problems, ranging from income inequality, social justice, economic development, threats to democracy and human rights, to global justice and climate change. Embedded within the traditional academic fields of all of JMU's colleges, the minor furnishes trans-disciplinary problem solvers and civic leaders.

James Madison University requires general education coursework in the American Experience domain (Cluster 4). All students are required to complete a 4-credit hour course in the American Experience (HIST 225, POSC 225, or JUST 225). These courses provide students with an understanding of the major concepts and themes that encapsulate American life today. Students learn about voting, democracy, values shaping difficult issues, and the complexity and diversity of American politics.

The Madison Center offers a Faculty Fellows in Collaborative Dialogue program which provides JMU faculty with opportunities to promote dialogue and engagement about difficult issues in the classroom. Faculty fellows are committed to fostering collaborative discussion techniques in their courses using tools from the Constructive Dialogue Institute (CDI) and the Interactivity Foundation (IF). Faculty earn a stipend for participating.

Commitment in Student Affairs:

JMU emphasizes free speech by incorporating a "Freedom of Expression & Speech" program in Fall freshmen orientation. All incoming students are required to attend this one-hour interactive session is dedicated to promoting a comprehensive grasp of free speech on campus and beyond.

Commitment to fund student workers for voting initiatives:

The Madison Center's Democracy Fellows program is for undergraduates who are interested in public service, civic engagement, and leading principles in a democratic society. The Fellows are the campus student leaders in engaging the student body in voter registration, education, and turnout. These students are paid above minimum wage and the Center has at least one work-study student dedicated to voting initiatives each year.

Commitment from campus and off-campus partners:

The Madison Center works with the Institute for Citizens and Scholars to support JMU faculty in embedding dialogue, deliberation, and engagement practices in their classrooms. JMU is part of the cohort of 20 university presidents committing their campuses to civil discourse and dialogue in the upcoming election year.

Our partnership with the Volcker Alliance focuses on building the NextGen Service Corps and the Civic Leadership Minor program: a program for students interested in civic service as a career and with a focus on key tenets of engagement theory and civic practice.

The partnership with NextGen Service Corps allows the Madison Center to offer more career opportunities for students seeking careers in public service. Daniel George, a post-graduate fellow, works as the Madison Center’s liaison to the network of programs at universities across the country that aim to inspire and prepare students to serve their communities and nation.

The Madison Center’s Woodson Martin Immigration and Democracy Initiative allows us to incorporate a focus on democracy in diverse spaces. The Center employs several fellows, including Woodson Martin Fellow, Gabby Leija-Hernandez to foster inclusive democracy on campus including; presenting at the Diversity Conference, Hispanic Festival, the Latin American, Latinx, and Caribbean Studies (LAXC) program, Scholars Latino Initiative, and Madison International.

The Madison Center has a longstanding relationship with the Harrisonburg Registrar's office and the Electoral Board. Harrisonburg City Registrar, Mark Finks meets regularly with the Madison Center staff to discuss issues related to election guidelines and JMU’s on-campus polling location to ensure accessibility for JMU students and community members.

Commitment - Awards



Voter Friendly Campus Designated Campus 2023-2024

Landscape

The Madison Center for Civic Engagement partners with the Center for Assessment and Research Studies (CARS) to collect information to better understand the campus voting culture and civic learning in course programming. CARS aids the promotion of civic learning for JMU students, working with the Center to assess Faculty Fellows and Deliberative Democracy programming. Civic engagement is also explicitly in the president's strategic plan, and this high administrative priority is reflected in the support this work is given. Civic learning and democratic engagement are visible throughout campus, in classrooms, within student organizations, and at various events. Examples of this integration include:

- Two of JMU's General Education Clusters; the American Experience and the Global Experience require students to think critically about their own society and its relationship to a larger global citizenship by examining a wide variety of the processes that shape the human experience.
- The Center partners with the College of Education to provide a panel lecture on important topics to civic education. For example, last year's programming included a discussion with two local school K-12 superintendents, a student teacher, and a civics expert.

Landscape - Partnerships

Student Government Association (SGA) is dedicated to collaborating with all members of our local communities to advocate for students while fostering a proactive, inclusive environment. The Legislative Affairs Committee operates to further enhance civic engagement, including disseminating voter information, campus-wide activism, and lobbying on the organization's behalf on local and federal levels. The Center works with SGA on new student orientation matters to emphasize civic engagement.

The new student orientation focuses on the free speech aspect of civic engagement. The Center partners with the Office of Residence Life to provide educational materials regarding free speech and civic engagement to new JMU students. The materials includes a video, a series of speakers, and open forum questions about free speech. The Center has partnered with the Bipartisan Policy Center to host training for the approximately 4,000 incoming students to assist in the understanding of civic engagement and civic learning.

The [National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation](#) brings people together across divides to tackle today's toughest challenges. The Madison Center facilitates deliberative dialogue forums to spur student conversation and emphasizing learning the skills to engage in difficult conversations, especially salient during the [National Week of Deliberation: Bridging Wicked Divides Project](#).

Landscape - Initiatives & Events

Every year, the Madison Center hosts a [Traveling Town Hall](#), inviting local and state candidates to speak with students in on-campus residence halls. The Democracy Fellows and campus partners facilitate event planning and prepare relevant discussions for the candidates. Each stop focuses on a particular topic, such as environment, democracy, and more. This event is a great way for Dukes to get a sense of candidate goals ahead of elections.

The Center also hosts [Conversations with Candidates](#), a fast-paced version of the Traveling Town Hall. Local and state candidates are invited to express their values and issue policies, where JMU students have the opportunity to ask questions of the candidates and further engage in issue-based discussion.

The [Common Good in the Commonwealth](#) series works to bring speakers nationwide to the JMU campus to discuss their careers and civic engagement. In 2023, the Madison Center was honored to host Carly Fiorina and Senator Tim Kaine. In April 2024, Secretary of Education Aimee Guidera joined us to speak with students on her role in Virginia civics. Similarly, the [Madison Vision Series](#), a lecture series that brings scholars, thinkers, and leaders of all kinds to campus for the exploration of issues facing our society brings new and diverse voices to our campus.

Dukes Vote is an undergraduate student club focusing on student engagement with elections, and provides opportunities and programs to build capacity, knowledge, skills, and values that prepare students to be informed participants in democracy. Every election cycle, the Dukes Vote team compiles a Voter Information Guide and works to organize and facilitate events on campus to emphasize student-centered civic engagement to aid in the participation in democratic endeavors. To further reach students, the Dukes Vote initiative also produces the [Dukes Vote Podcast](#) and coordinates social media engagement with on-campus events to speak directly with students, such as in [Dukes Discourse](#).

One of the Madison Center's new pilot programs this year is our Faculty Voting Champions program. Modeled after the SLSV version, the Madison Center invites faculty interested in promoting voting to students to partner in registration tabling efforts, voter education initiatives, and to encourage students to vote on election day.



Landscape - Reducing Barriers

James Madison University's voting rates are significantly higher than those of our peer institutions, according to the 2020 NSLVE Report. Assessment data on JMU's campus climate was collected in April 2022, showing that across multiple marginalized identities, the majority of these students felt less comfortable with the climate of campus than the majority of students. This displays there is still significant work to do in building a safe environment for democratic engagement across campus. Data presented in the report also indicates the campus climate findings at JMU are consistent with those of similar higher education institutions across the country.

On election day, JMU hosts an on-campus voting precinct in a strategic location: those who live on-campus may vote in-person on election day at the on-campus precinct. As part of an effort by the Madison Center, JMU, and the Harrisonburg Registrar's office to increase accessibility, the on-campus precinct has been a great success. This has allowed for more students to have easier access to a voting precinct on election day.

Continuous and open communication with the local community is necessary to maintain positive relationships between campus and the community. The Madison Center has a positive and proactive relationship with the Harrisonburg Registrar's office and the Electoral Board. Harrisonburg is also an incredibly diverse city, including a large immigrant and refugee population, with some 25 percent of the population speaking a language other than English. Our Woodson Martin Democracy Fellowship Initiative expands our capacity to engage with this diverse population in Harrisonburg and community-based organizations. Our post-graduate fellow, Gabby Leija-Hernandez works to engage those who are unable to vote. She spearheads several initiatives including tabling events which ask students to answer questions regarding immigrant issues. This facilitates more knowledge for those who are unable to vote and also allows for pathways to be more civically engaged without voting.

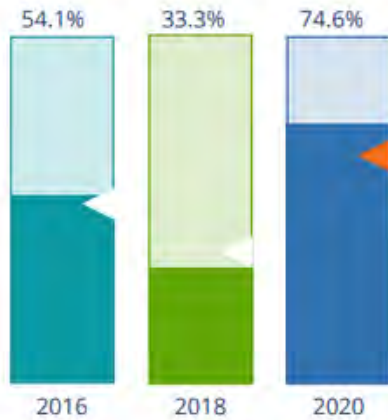
Landscape - Communication

The Madison Center has revitalized its use of social media with a team of post-graduate Presidential Engagement Fellow Mia Mannix, and undergraduate Communication Fellows, Ai Vy Le and Leia Surovell. This team enhances community and outreach and engagement through relevant posts and supplemental information. Other avenues of communication include the Dukes Vote podcast, newsletter, and blog to educate and share important civic learning and democratic engagement opportunities. Our partnership with University Communications also allows the Madison Center to share university-wide messages about voting and elections.

Graduate Assistant Amelia Stoner coordinates class visit presentations to classrooms, allowing the Madison Center to reach JMU students directly to inform and educate about registering to vote, election day information, and to highlight civic engagement in our community.

NSLVE Data

VOTING RATE



The **Voting Rate** is the percentage of eligible students who voted on Election Day. The voting rate is also the product of the registration and yield rates.

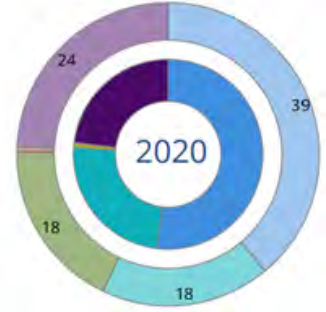
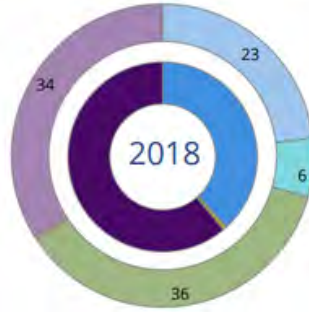
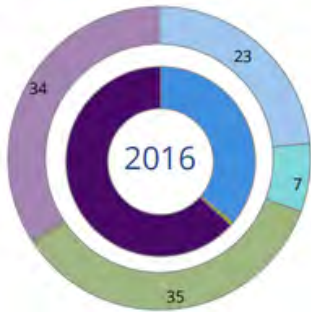
The voting rate for 2020 was significantly higher than other recent years. The goal of the Madison Center is to at least maintain if not increase this number. The Madison Center is always aiming to improve student voter registration numbers. Our long and short-term goals section specify these aims.

Voting and Registration Rates

	2016	2018	2020	2016-2020 Change (p.p.)
Total Student Enrollment	21,044	21,492	21,301	↑ 257
(Age under 18/Unknown)	-	-	-	-
(NSC reported non-resident aliens)	548	461	308	↓ -240
(FERPA records blocked)	-	178	-	-
(Non-Degree Seeking Students)	-	-	-	-
Total eligible voters	20,479	20,852	20,980	↑ 501
Number of students who registered	17,149	17,286	19,299	↑ 2,150
Number of students who voted	11,081	6,935	15,656	↑ 4,575
Registration Rate %	84	83	92	↑ 8
Voting Rate of Registered Students %	65	40	81	↑ 17
Voting Rate %	54	33	75	↑ 21

NSLVE Data, cont.

By Voting Method ■ Not-In-Person ■ Early Vote ■ In-Person ■ Other ■ Provisional ■ Unknown



Early voting sky-rocketed in 2020 compared to past years. The Madison Center aims to continue its partnership with the City Registrar to encourage early voting. This includes our goals related to Voter Information Products, Voter Education, and Syllabus Statements.

Short-Term Goals

Specific	Measurable	Achievable	Relevant	Time-Based
Build better Voter Information Products	Invite feedback from partnerships and see increase in <u>early-voting numbers</u>	Build upon success of Traveling Town Hall, partner with more campus organizations, redesign Voter Guide,	Partnerships with Terror Management Labs, Student Government Association	This should be accomplished by the Fall 2024 Semester
Work to Implement Voting Education and Voter Registration Supplies to Resident Assistants	Invite feedback from RAs and see increase in <u>early-voting numbers</u>	Provide packet, training, voter registration supplies at RA orientation	Partner with Residence Life	Accomplish by Freshman Orientation (Fall 2024)
Develop Canvas Module	Create a comprehensive module that will be on all JMU students pages	Construct an easily accessible Canvas module that links to TurboVote and JMU Civic Engagement pages	Work with our Engagement and Presidential Fellows, JMU Libraries	Develop and implement canvas module by Fall 2024
Develop Faculty Champion Voting Program	Work with Faculty Fellows to have this program up and running by Fall 2024	Create a program that certifies faculty members as 'Voter Champions' who are good resources for students interested in voting	Work with current Faculty Fellows	Develop and implement by Fall 2024

Long-Term Goals

<p>Increase Voter Registration and Turnout</p>	<p>TurboVote and NSLVE Data</p>	<p>Increase registration from 92% (<u>NSLVE 2020</u>) to 95% and voting rate from 74.6% (2020 NSLVE) to 80%</p>	<p>Partnering with Greek Life, Athletics, RA and Res Hall Directors, Off-campus Res life office</p>	<p>For November 5, 2024 and elections thereafter</p>
<p>Increase Faculty Commitment and Involvement with Dukes Vote</p>	<p>Work with colleagues from <u>Center for Assessment and Research Studies (CARS)</u>.</p>	<p>Give faculty a packet including Canvas voting module, syllabus statement, invite to participate, certify faculty members as Faculty Voting Champions</p>	<p>Partnering with Faculty Fellows and Faculty across campus</p>	<p>By November 5, 2024 Election</p>
<p>Work in the Community to Host sets of Candidate Forums</p>	<p>Gain insights from hosted candidates about their attitudes toward the events</p>	<p>Work with partners in the community and on-campus for maximum turnout</p>	<p>Work with Local, State, and National Candidates, student organizations</p>	<p>Accomplish for all relevant elections</p>
<p>Voter Syllabus Statement</p>	<p>Our goal is to get this statement on 50 syllabi, we will ask faculty to send proofs of their syllabi, this should increase early-voting <u>numbers</u></p>	<p>Create a syllabus statement that reflects voter registration and civic engagement at JMU</p>	<p>Work with current Faculty Fellows</p>	<p>Hit 50 syllabi by the end of Fall 2024, and increase from there</p>
<p>Increase Quality of Voter Education</p>	<p>Monitor turnout to events</p>	<p>Improve Traveling Town Hall, continue Conversations with Candidates/Voter forums</p>	<p>Partnerships with campus and community organizations</p>	<p>For November 5, 2024 and thereafter</p>

Strategy

With new leadership, the Madison Center is reinvigorated with a sense of mission and purpose regarding civic engagement work.

This year, in addition to our voting engagement and information efforts, we are putting more effort into our “Civic Engagement Beyond Voting” work to include a diversity of classroom and campus-wide dialogue and deliberation efforts.

Moreover, sponsored lectures and social media/digital educational materials will accompany these initiatives.

Other initiatives include:

- **New Student Orientation:** The Madison Center has an ongoing partnership with Orientation, Community Engagement and Volunteer Center, and the Office of Residence Life. Democracy Fellows will train Resident Advisors on the Center’s programming, voter education, registration, and will provide resources for first-year students.
- **Student Organizations:** The Center will reach out to the 400+ organizations on JMU’s campus with information regarding programming, voter education, and registration information. Democracy Fellows and volunteers will attend student organization meetings and offer voter education and registration.
- **Civic Holidays:** The Madison Center is an active participant during civic holidays, evidenced best by recognition as a National Voter Registration Day partner. On NVRD, The Madison Center provides a day of programming on highly trafficked areas on campus. During National Voter Education Week, The Madison Center conducts voter education programming, including but not limited to: candidates running for office, polling locations, absentee voting, and voting plans. On National Vote Early Day, the Center plans programming to aid student voters on how they want to cast their ballot for the election. On Election Hero Day, The Madison Center creates materials thanking election heroes, including election administration teams and poll workers, an essential backbone to democracy.

- **Class visits and syllabus statements:** Through campus-wide emails and communications with department heads, the Madison Center and Dukes Vote will offer class visits by trained volunteers to all JMU faculty. Class visits incorporate education on the importance of voting, voting processes and laws, opportunities to register to vote, and time for audience questions. The Madison Center will aim to provide important information regarding registration and elections for course syllabi, available to all instructional faculty to be utilized as they wish.
- **Voter Guide:** The Madison Center researches and writes a nonpartisan voter guide including candidate platforms and information every election cycle. This guide is posted on the JMU website and announced across social media platforms and university communications.
- **Traveling Town Hall:** In partnership with the Office of Residence Life, candidates or representatives of the candidates running are invited to participate in a traveling town hall, an evening spent across JMU's campus connecting candidates with students. This event provides a yearly opportunity for students to directly access candidates running for office.
- **Student Volunteers:** Through our partnership with Student Affairs, the Madison Center will create a strong volunteer base to increase the agency and participation of students across campus. With this new volunteer base, the Center hopes to reach across campus, engaging more frequently with students from traditionally marginalized groups and low turn-out fields of study.
- **Electoral board and Harrisonburg registrar partnership:** The Madison Center will continue its valued partnership with the local voter registrar and electoral board to ensure the voter registration efforts align with the registrar's needs. The local registrar and electoral board provide valuable guidance on registration processes and presentations to our students.
- **Panhellenic council:** As many students are involved in Greek Life at JMU, the Madison Center will attend the Panhellenic Council meetings to provide voter registration information. The Center also plans on connecting with the Inter-Cultural Greek Council focused on ensuring access for traditionally underserved and marginalized communities. According to NSLVE, male students had a 13% lower voter turnout rate than women. Ensuring that male fraternities vote through the Panhellenic Council will help alleviate this difference.

- **Canvas module:** The Center plans to construct a Canvas module for incoming students as a mandatory training prior to attending JMU.
- **TurboVote:** The Dukes Vote TurboVote site has gained visits and traction as a one-stop shop for all voter information direction a student may need.
- **Democracy Docket educational primers:** Democracy Fellows will have the opportunity to research and produce an academic primer on a topic that interests them and publish this digital material each semester.
- **Woodson Martin Democracy Fellow Initiative:** As mentioned above, the Woodson Martin Democracy Fellow Initiative focuses on immigration and refugee-related issues through outreach and programming aimed towards those from traditionally marginalized and underrepresented communities. The Woodson Martin Democracy Fellows focus on creating resources that address barriers that keep members of marginalized communities from having an equal voice, participation, and share in the democratic process.
- **Absentee voting party:** The Madison Center plans to organize events where students can fill out their absentee ballot collectively.
- **Engage off-campus students:** The Center will partner with off-campus housing complexes to inform communities and their inhabitant students on voter engagement. The Center will provide marketing materials for these efforts. The Center plans to organize group rides for students to get to their off-campus polling locations.
- **Election Day:** In an effort to drive voter turnout at our on-campus precinct the center plans to have faculty placed outside the on-campus precinct. Further, the Center plans “dorm storms,” which involve knocking on Residence Hall rooms and inviting students to walk together to the polls.

The entire Madison Center staff is committed to implementing the action plan and the direct, day-to-day supervision is provided by the interim Executive Director, Dr. Kara Dillard, in conjunction with the graduate assistant, Amelia Stoner. Democracy Fellows implement a significant amount of this work.

Reporting

This action plan will be shared widely with internal and external partners of the Madison Center. This plan will be publicly available on the JMU website and shared with relevant stakeholders on campus and within the community, including national partners.

Data from the 2020 National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) conducted by the Institute for Democracy and Higher Education at Tufts University is used to inform these goals. This data is shared publicly and can be viewed on the Center's website.

Other data comes from the Center for Assessment and Research Studies (CARS) at JMU which assesses the civic learning component of JMU course programming.

Finally, data from the Dukes Vote TurboVote site demonstrates the online traffic the site has received.

Evaluation

The purpose of evaluative efforts is to ensure methods are data-driven and evidence-based, and to create mechanisms to track and assess project outcomes. These include participation in events, registration numbers, attitudinal changes among participants, and the use of resources. The purpose of this evaluation will allow the institution to examine the impact various resources from the Center have on campus. The institution also conducts an assessment of students during their first and third years at JMU. In this assessment, civic attitudes, engagement, and values are measured. The audience of this evaluation includes all relevant stakeholders, such as students, faculty, staff, donors, administration, community members, advisory boards, and national partners, and will be carried out by both the Madison Center and James Madison University.

The Madison Center is continuing deep partnership with CARS (Center for Assessment and Research Studies at JMU), adding a more robust assessment of the National Week of Deliberation program, and to assess the Faculty Fellows program.

The evaluation will be carried out at various times in the year. The Institutional Assessment is carried out during the fall semester. Data from this assessment is traditionally made available by the following Spring semester. The assessment by the Madison Center of Center programs will be conducted throughout the year. This data will be used to inform future strategies and engagement efforts.

The data collected from Madison Center events include attendees, streams online (if applicable), students interactions while tabling, and the registration rate of the JMU population. At larger events, the Center will hand out flyers to attendees that link to a survey about their experience at Center-sponsored events. Attitudinal changes over time, as well as measures of civic efficacy among students, will be tracked using JMU assessment data.

The Madison Center currently assess the National Week of Deliberation programming with survey results to ensure the effectiveness of these efforts. It was found that an overwhelming majority of participants were able to find common ground in their deliberative dialogue sessions (90-94%).

Credits and Acknowledgements

Primary Authors

Dr. Kara Dillard, Interim Executive Director
Amelia Stoner, Graduate Assistant
Leia Surovell, Communication Fellow

James Madison Center for Civic Engagement Contact Information

Email: civic@jmu.edu
Social Media: @jmucivic