

## ABOUT LMC VOTES AND LAKE MICHIGAN COLLEGE



Lake Michigan College offers over 80 different academic programs, including career education, transfer programs, part-time and full-time options and online learning.

Even before students graduate from high school, LMC has partnered with local school systems to offer college-level coursework to qualified students. With Early College, students earn both high school and college credit for courses, saving families thousands of dollars in college tuition.

LMC has 347 full-time employees with 41% full-time and 43% part-time faculty guiding 3,209 students on their learning journey. Most of our students are in-district, but we have 13% out of district and 2% international. We serve a diverse student body from six counties with three campus locations as well as distance education, dual-credit classes in high schools and specialize learning opportunities for career education programs. The college's goal is to improve the quality of life in our region by establishing connections using civic, social, creative and economic opportunities in the communities we serve.

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

LMC Votes has participated in active voter education, registration and engagement efforts with various national organizations since fall 2016. From inception, LMC Votes has increased voter participation rates as well as expanded coalition membership both internally and externally.

The Campus Vote Project action plan was written and developed under the leadership of Dr. Tiffany Bohm and a campus coalition including: CVP fellow, Jaebie Camacho; Director of Student Life, Mel Grau; the Marketing Department, Academic Advising and counterparts at satellite campuses.

The plan will be implemented at the main campus in Benton Harbor as well as our satellite campuses in Niles, South Haven and Allegan. LMC Votes will be assisting the Berrien County Clerk with the administration of the Early Voting location on our campus from February 16-27, 2024 with student volunteers. The goals of the plan are to educate voters both on campus and in the community, register voters for the primary election on February 27 and the general election on November 5, 2024 and conduct engagement activities on campus for both internal and external audiences.

This plan will be implemented January 1, 2024 and be updated for the next cycle by January 1, 2025. Execution of the plan and all components will be lead by the LMCVotes team, led by Dr. Bohm, student volunteers, community and campus stakeholders identified as our coalition partners.

## **LEADERSHIP**

LMC Votes is led by Dr. Tiffany Bohm, the lead political science faculty at Lake Michigan College. Dr. Bohm supervises the POSC 295 internship program as well as coordinates the student fellowships with Campus Vote Project. As far as a succession plan, Dr. Bohm has detailed continuity plans should a replacement be necessary. This is not currently listed in any job description but can easily be transitioned to Student Life or another faculty member.

The LMC Votes coalition includes:

- Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs (Dr. Ken Flowers)
- Dean of Arts and Sciences (Mr. Kris Zook)
- Director of Student Life (Mel Grau)
- Executive Director, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Programs (Charmae Sanders)
- Honors Program Coordinator (Dr. Amy Scrima) and Honors student volunteers
- Various faculty as time permits (Dr. Jessica Beachy, Lisa Augustyniak, Jay Keeler, Dr. Mya Hernandez)
- Residence Hall Director and Resident Assistants (RA's)
- Executive Director of Marketing (Jennifer Shoemaker) and the Marketing Department
- William Hessel Library (Diane Baker)
- South Haven campus (Keri Garr and Jeremy Burleson)
- Bertrand/Niles campus (Kam Chancellor and Barbara Craig)
- National Society for Leadership and Success members (Chapter advisor: Tiffany Bohm)
- Berrien and Cass County League of Women Voters (Faith Schoon)
- American Association of University Women (Julie Leavitt)
- Berrien County Clerk's Office (Sharon Tyler and Kathryn Klemesrud)
- Campus Vote Project (Landon Myers)
- Campus Takeover (Ryan Drysdale)
- Students Learn, Students Vote (Clarissa Unger)

## **COMMITMENT**

Lake Michigan College is committed to voter education, registration and engagement efforts. Dr. Ken Flowers, Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs, signed the ALL-IN Voter challenge for the last two years. Both the college President, Dr. Trevor Kubatzke and Dr. Flowers actively promote voting and participation efforts as part of the the college mission "Together we empower people and communities to thrive through education, innovation, and experiences" by connecting encouraging students, staff and faculty to get involved in the community through civic activities."

Our NSLVE data is routinely presented at the Board of Trustee meetings and minutes from the 2021 meeting can be found here: [https://www.lakemichigancollege.edu/sites/default/files/2022-08/2021 12-07 Minutes.pdf](https://www.lakemichigancollege.edu/sites/default/files/2022-08/2021%2012-07%20Minutes.pdf)

NSLVE data, when received for 2022, will be posted to the political science web page from the college website. The college currently recognizes our Voter Friendly Campus 2023-2024 badge here: <https://www.lakemichigancollege.edu/academics/social-sciences/political-science>  
Our marketing department frequently recognizes the accomplishments of LMC Votes with press releases and one can be found here: <https://www.lakemichigancollege.edu/about/news-events/2022-12/lake-michigan-college-recognized-2022-all-most-engaged-campus-college>  
Others are posted on the college website and can be found with a search of keywords “LMC Votes” or “election.”

It is also noteworthy that voters recently approved a millage renewal in the 2023 off-cycle election. This brought a lot of attention to our campus leadership and community connections for political goals. The media campaign and education efforts solidified LMC as a trusted source of information for political events, candidates and elections. Details can be found here: <https://www.lakemichigancollege.edu/community/millage>

As part of our Higher Learning Commission (HLC) accreditation, the college has recently implemented a co-curriculum assessment database. Since this is a new effort, the 2024 election year will be the first year faculty and administrators will be able to report co-curricular activities in support of voter education, registration and engagement efforts. The LMC Votes team will evaluate efforts and their outcomes in the after-action report submitted to CVP as well as use the data to inform our next action plan.

## **LANDSCAPE**

Lake Michigan College is still waiting on our 2022 data and will update our action plan once received.

In 2020, LMC had 1,180 students vote which was an increase of 395. Since LMC did not participate in NSLVE for 2016, we compare data to 2018 and 2014. Lake Michigan College had a 61% voting rate for 18-21 year olds in 2020 which is an increase of 30 percentage points from 2018 and 48% from 2014. It is clear that voter education, registration and engagement efforts are making a difference in encouraging young voters to participate.

In southwest Michigan, there have been several salient ballot measures that drew young voters to the polls in recent elections. These issues include the recreational use of marijuana, reproductive rights and voters rights, which all impacted state legislation. While COVID-19 may have dampened our education efforts and changed outreach methods, the 2022 election saw widespread interest in candidates and policy relevant to young voters, specifically with students loans and higher education policy. We anticipate the upcoming 2024 election will experience interest in similar issues but are also aware of voter apathy & disengagement due to misinformation or information overload.

## GOALS

The five goals Lake Michigan College seeks to accomplish during the 2024 election year include:

1. Increase the number of students registered to vote through enhanced marketing efforts on our main campus (Benton Harbor/St. Joseph), the South Haven campus, the Niles/Bertrand Crossing campus and the Allegan campus. The latter three campuses are mainly attended by high school students who may be eligible to register to vote depending on their birthday.

- Our goal is to register 350 new voters. This number is calculated from the early enrollment data for the 2024 spring semester and estimated unregistered voters in the voting age population.

- This goal will be measured from current Michigan Secretary of State voter registration data and the IPEDS data submitted to NSLVE.

- The timeframe for this goal will be the spring 2024 semester and the fall 2024 semester.

- We will collaborate with the office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion to support voter education and registration efforts to marginalized groups on campus and in the community.

2. Increase the number of voters (participation rate) specifically 18-24 year olds, not attending college. Since there has been a decrease in college enrollment, there is a segment of the youth voter population that may not be reached by efforts on college campuses. LMC Votes will work with our community partners to reach young people in the community who may not know about election issues and may not be planning to vote in the 2024 general election. *\*We are a SMALL, two-year institution where most students are working outside of their coursework. It is incredibly challenging to get students off-campus to work within the community. We partner with external agencies on-campus so their work off-campus is informed by students and their insightfulness.*

- This goal will be measured by collecting number of contacts made and collecting pledge cards with contact information so LMC Votes student volunteers can contact the pledge contacts the day of the election to remind them to vote.

- The timeframe for this goal will be the spring 2024 semester and the fall 2024 semester, at least one week prior to primary and general elections.

- We will collaborate with the office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion to support voter education and registration efforts to marginalized groups on campus and in the community.

3. Establish 1,500 Get Out the Vote (GOTV) pledges through face-to-face contact.

- This goal will be measured by collecting number of contacts made and collecting pledge cards with contact information so LMC Votes student volunteers can contact the pledge contacts the day of the election to remind them to vote.

- The timeframe for this goal will be the spring 2024 semester and the fall 2024 semester, at least one week prior to primary and general elections.

- We will collaborate with the office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion to support GOTV efforts within marginalized communities.

4. Increase public awareness of the issues and candidate positions for the general election with at least five published or aired news stories regarding GOTV and voter education activities.

- This goal will be measured by working with our marketing department to highlight LMC Votes events, activities and student volunteers. We will keep track and record every newsmaker and post to social media.

- Our news stories will focus around a specific event and likely topic. For example, Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel will be presenting on “Election Protection.” We have posters and a press release which highlights the integrity of the upcoming presidential election which we hope will increase the voter rate because people will feel more confident.

- The timeframe for this goal will be the spring 2024 semester and the fall 2024 semester, at least one week prior to primary and general elections.

- We will collaborate with the office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion to support voter education on issues relevant to marginalized populations.

5. Improve collaborative relationship with the county clerk’s office and increase understanding of the electoral process.

- This goal will be measured by the number of events and students participating in joint efforts between LMC Votes and the Berrien County Clerk’s office.

- The timeframe for this goal will be the spring 2024 semester and the fall 2024 semester.

- We will collaborate with the office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion to ensure marginalized populations are represented in these efforts.

- LMC is a smaller, two-year institution and one of our long-term goals will be to create a continuity process that includes collecting “call cards” for students to fill out and request a reminder call the day before the election. This is a HUGE undertaking as we do not have many students who are able to set aside time to calling those who opt-in for a reminder call.

### Long Term Goals

- Increase participation and membership in the LMC Votes on-campus organization. We have rolling enrollment and high turnover so students generally only participate 2-3 semesters. We would like to create a mentorship program with the local high school to foster a relationship where students who will attend LMC already know about the program. Or, if these high school students attend another school within the state of Michigan, they will be informed and engaged to seek out a civic participation program at that school.

- We hope to receive grant money that will help us use an app or software to engage register voters.

### STRATEGY

- In partnership with the campus office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion we will host a first-generation college registration event. We will register new voters for the general election, provide precinct location and sample ballots to each voter. (Goal 1)
- In collaboration with our community partners, we will offer several tabling events with college-provided laptops so interested voters can a) lookup their voter registration b) register to

vote if not registered already 3) receive information about absentee voting if out of state or out of local precinct area. (Goal 1)

- LMC Votes has created bookmarks with the Michigan Secretary of State's voter registration website in a QR code. These will be passed out during club rush days. (Goal 1, 2 and 3)
- LMC Votes will support the National Voter Registration Day (NVRD) with events on all campuses. With student volunteers and community partners, we will utilize college provided laptops to verify registration, precinct location or register new voters. (Goal 2 and 3)
- Our goal is to have two tabling or canvassing events in the community during the spring 2024 semester and three tabling or canvassing events in the fall 2024 semester. At the time of creating this plan, our interest is in reaching 18-24 year olds who may be working full-time as opposed to attending school and our coalition will meet in January to brainstorm and schedule the most opportune events. (Goal 2 and 3)
- In October 2024, Lake Michigan College hosts over 300 high school students at the Mendel Center for Career Pathway Day. In addition to students from area high schools, there are several local businesses and career organizations represented. LMC Votes will exhibit a "mock ballot booth" where visitors can view a sample ballot and pledge to vote in November 2024. (Goal 2 and 3)
- In the past, we have had several media stories published about LMC Votes. Since the local media has recognized LMC for our Voter Friendly Campus designation as well as the Silver Award for All-In Voter campaign, we plan to continue to capitalize on the relationship with local reporters for increased coverage of our voter engagement and education efforts. (Goal 4)
- Lake Michigan College will serve as an Early Voting Site for the primary election on February 27, 2024. It is presumed that the college will also be an Early Voting Site for the general election in November as well. LMC Votes will serve as a liaison and conduit for advertising and training election workers in support of Berrien County Clerk office efforts. Since Michigan has not provided the state election worker handbook or training dates yet, we anticipate supporting these efforts when information is provided. (Goal 5)
- LMC Votes student volunteers will serve as greeters for voters entering the Todd Center on our main campus for early voting. These student volunteers will work with the Berrien County Clerk's office and represent the college during the primary election process. A co-curricular assessment will be created to offer student's credit for their contribution as well as evaluate knowledge acquired from witnessing the electoral process first-hand. (Goal 5)
- On the evening of November 5, 2024, LMC Votes will host a party on campus. Food will be provided and attendees will watch the results come in and discuss. This event will be moderated by CVP fellows and Dr. Bohm. All clubs, organizations and students will be invited to this event. (Goal 5)

## **REPORTING**

As mentioned previously, our 2022 NSLVE report is not available yet. Once available, it will be presented (in summary) to the Board of Trustees as well as posted on the college website.

## EVALUATION

Following the 2024 election, the CVP fellows, LMC Votes student volunteers and members of the coalition will meet with Dr. Bohm to discuss outcomes, successes and best practices related to the current CVP plan.

- We plan to collect the number of likes/shares/clicks on LMC Votes stories through our college social media accounts (Facebook/Instagram, X and the stand-alone website). We will identify the top stories and the content as well as day/time to plan for the upcoming year.

- We will record the attendance at our events like the upcoming visit from Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel. We will assess how many students/staff of LMC attend as well as assess the number of community members in attendance for a measure of external reach.

- In the fall 2024 semester, we will increase our messaging and evaluate any changes (hopefully increases) to our voter education and engagement efforts on campus.

- With this help of our administration and the Institution Review Board (IRB), we will create a survey instrument after the election to measure internal reach. Our focus will be on messaging and how the different modalities (social media, on-campus events, flyers, emails, text) impacted voter information and turnout.

The plan will be updated to include revisions as well as add new data for the 2026 mid-term election. Additionally, when the 2024 NSLVE data is released, this will be presented to the college president and Board of Trustees as well as released to the public via press release.

Point of Contact for LMC Votes!

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