



**VOTER REGISTRATION AND ENGAGEMENT PLAN  
FOR LAKE MICHIGAN COLLEGE  
2020-2022**

About 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.

Prior to the 2018 fall semester, LMC did not have an institution-wide voter engagement and registration program. Instead, outside agencies provided ad-hoc support with minimal interaction from staff, administration or faculty. Although these activities were somewhat beneficial, an institution-wide program, like LMC Votes!, provides a synergistic environment where all facets of the campus community are impacted by our information, engagement and registration efforts.

Plan Overview

During the fall 2020 and spring 2021 semesters, Lake Michigan College will implement the second campus-wide voter registration and engagement initiative. We learned many valuable lessons in the 2018 mid-term election that we have applied to the upcoming 2020 general election. Our goals have been updated to include the 2016 NSLVE data and to build upon foundation we initiated in 2018.

The five goals Lake Michigan College seeks to accomplish in 2020 are:

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, the Allegan campus, the Van Buren campus and the Bangor campus. The latter three campuses are mainly attended by 5<sup>th</sup> year high school students who may be eligible to register depending on their birthday.  
*\* Our goal is 500 new registered voters by Election Day 2020*
2. In 2018, we gathered over 1,500 contacts or pledges to vote on Election Day.  
*\* Beginning with registration efforts on National Voter Registration in 2019, activities and events throughout 2020, we hope to double our contacts and outreach. Our goal is to collect 3,000 pledges to vote on Election Day 2020.*
3. Building off our social media presence and community outreach efforts of 2018, we hope to double our Get Out the Vote contacts in 2020 using various platforms: Constitution Day (Sep. 17), National Voter Registration Day (Sept. 22), drop-in or virtual voting Q & A sessions (2), Honors Colloquium Presentation, LMC Votes! keychain make-and-take event (Oct. 5), Party at the Polls (Nov. 3)  
*\* Our goal is 160 hits per day on social media accounts (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram) and 3,000 GOTV contacts between September 4 and November 3, 2020. In light of recent events surrounding Covid-19, we are preparing for a heavy social media and virtual presence for the upcoming 2020 election.*
4. In 2018, we had three media stories published about the LMC Votes! efforts. Since then, the local media has recognized LMC for our Voter Friendly Campus designation as well as the Silver Award for All-In Voter campaign. In 2020, our goal is to have at least four stories published about LMC Votes! and our efforts to inform and engage voters.
5. We plan to maintain the current campus coalition and expand it to other support organizations, both internally and externally. The current organization includes different divisions on campus and two from the community.

The LMC Votes! coalition includes:

- Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs (Dr. Leslie Kellogg)
- Political Science Program Coordinator (Dr. Tiffany Bohm)
- Dean of Arts and Sciences (Dr. Gary Roberts)
- Director of Student Life (Andrea Zick)
- Start to Finish Coordinator (Charmae Sanders)
- Honors Program Coordinator (Dr. Amy Scrima) and Honors students
- Residence Hall Director and Resident Assistants (RA's)
- Marketing Department (Candice Elders)
- William Hessel Library (Diane Baker)
- South Haven campus (Keri Garr and Jeremy Burleson)
- Bertrand/Niles campus (Nick Hooper and Kam Chancellor)
- Student Government Association, Club Presidents and Student Senators
- League of Women Voters

- Berrien County Clerk's Office (Sharon Tyler)
- Rock the Vote
- Campus Vote Project (Sumaiya Ahmed)
- Campus Takeover/National Voter Registration Day org
- #VoteTogether/Young Invincibles
- Students Learn, Students Vote
- Campus Elect (Lisa Lawrason)
- [DoSomething.org](http://DoSomething.org) (Adam Garner)
- All In Challenge (Ryan Drysdale)

### 2020 Plan Overview

This will be the second year of the LMC Votes! project and much of the preparation occurred during fall 2019. The coordination completed prior to the beginning of the spring 2020 semester included: updating voter registration forms and informational hand-outs, maintaining our social media presence (Facebook and Twitter accounts), updating the Elections course, POSC 205, (fall 2020 semester), collecting donations and securing volunteers for the upcoming initiative. We have hired two fellows for the second year of participation in the Voter Friendly Campus program.

For those taking the POSC 205: Elections course in fall 2020, we will organize initial meetings to assign duties and tasks over the semester. These duties will include preparing for Constitution Day and supporting the CVP fellows in fall 2020 events. Students in the "Elections" course will facilitate 1-2 voter registration drives, Q & A sessions and the "Party at the Poll," election night party. Given the restrictions and potential effects of Covid-19, the participation of students from the POSC 205 course is dependent on campus status. All events may be moved to an online platform if necessary. We plan to coordinate again with the local chapters of the League of Women Voters and the South Haven chapter of the American Association of University Women on National Voter Registration Day, September 22, 2020.

Throughout the months of October and November, the students will work to highlight local issues and educate the campus community about the candidates (non-partisan) running for local offices. LMC Votes! will host a "First Time Voter" events at our Bertrand Crossing/Niles, Allegan, Van Buren, Bangor and South Haven campuses; in the event that attendance is limited due to Covid-19, we will host virtual events online. Our dual-enrolled high school students attend classes at these particular locations. In the political science courses taught at these locations, only one student was 18 and able to vote in the November 2018 election. That being said, we believe we can encourage future voting by offering a "first time voter" or "future voter" event for those who are too young to vote in 2020.

Between September 4 and November 3, 2020, students will use the LMC Votes! social media networks to engage with the campus community as well as our external partners. Our CVP fellows will serve as administrators to support the media presence with content and information. We will work with the marketing department to issue press releases about the voter registration

and engagement events as well as post events related to LMC Votes! on the college homepage and the college Facebook page.

### Voter Registration Efforts

The LMC Votes! voter registration efforts will begin the first week of school with a table at the “Welcome Week” event for the fall 2020 semester, pending Covid-19 restrictions being lifted. Handouts on upcoming events for Constitution Day, National Voter Registration Day, the Make-and-Take event and the Party at the Polls will be provided. We will hand out LMC Votes! Bookmarks, or other marketing material(s), to highlight important dates for voter registration opportunities as well as special events. The LMC Votes! team will also work with the Student Government and clubs on campus to staff volunteers at all of the voter registration and engagement events.

We will work closely with our full and part-time faculty and student services staff to announce registration events at all professional development opportunities. We will encourage faculty to include the list of events in their course syllabi and consider offering extra credit for student participation. Additionally, “The Chronicle,” our campus (and alumni) newsletter will highlight all of the LMC Votes! events.

During our registration period, September 14 to November 1, 2020, we will post several reminders on the LMC Votes! Facebook page, the LMC Votes! Twitter page and the CCTVs located in several locations on campus. The William Hessel Library will provide blank registration forms at their front desk and student workers will help remind all students to register to vote.

### Voter Education

The foundation for our campus-wide voter engagement project will be the “Elections” course (POSC 205) again. This worked well in 2018 and with some minor adjustment we will use the same pedagogy to guide the course as well as efforts on campus. All students registered in the course, CVP volunteers and other student volunteers who wish to participate make up the LMC Votes! Team.

The LMC Votes! Team will research and present candidate biographies to classmates as well as classes we are invited to present within; voter registration forms will be made available at all presentation events. Their efforts serve as an active learning component; students in the course will learn first-hand the nuances to elections and how challenging it can be to win an election from a candidate perspective. During the course, students will listen to several guest speakers including: a county council candidate, the local chapter President of the League of Women Voters, and the Berrien County Elections Administrator. Their efforts will be matched with a course readings to satisfy the course learning objectives. This course is planned to be on campus two days a week; however, should this class be moved online to Covid-19 restrictions, the events and participation will be modified accordingly.

With the help of the CVP fellows, the LMC Votes! Team will create literature to market toward the high school age group. With the help of our registrar and the resources available to us (pending FERPA), we hope to create a listserv of high school seniors to inform them of how to register to vote, their polling location and other non-partisan candidate information as appropriate.

Additionally, the LMC Votes! Team will offer a candidate forum where students can meet candidates and ask questions regarding their political platform and goals. Pending Covid-19 restrictions being lifted, we hope to have this forum in a high traffic area like the “Hawks Nest” with food and drinks provided. The CVP fellows will contact all local candidates in an attempt to have the best attendance and non-partisan opportunity as possible. In the event we are unable to offer an on-campus event, we will offer an online forum or forums to introduce candidates to our local community.

During our Constitution Day event, we plan to register new voters as well as have an activity to encourage participation around campus related to our constitutional right to elect our representatives. We plan to hold National Voter Registration Day events at all of the satellite campuses in the fall 2020 semester. In addition to celebrating the anniversary of the signing of our Constitution, this will be a comprehensive push to register as many new voters as possible for the upcoming 2020 general election.

We plan to print generic ballots for several of the voting precincts within our college campus voting area and place these in prominent areas like the William Hessel library, the main bulletin board and several large classrooms and lecture halls. Additionally, our tabling events will have a laptop where individuals can check their registration status and verify their precinct information.

Using our social media accounts, the LMC Votes! Team will share many stories and articles related to local candidates and elections. We also provide links to the Michigan Secretary of State’s office as well as the local county election administrators to facilitate voter education and registration. The CVP fellows will moderate an LMC Votes! blog that is currently in development. We hope this blog will serve as an additional resource to students, as well as the local community, and will be linked to our social media accounts. The CVP fellows plan to post weekly and will invite guest bloggers to participate; students in the POSC 205 “Elections” course will also participate as part of their course objectives.

The LMC Votes! Team will facilitate casual discussion opportunities in the “Hawks Nest,” which is the main student-gathering place on campus. Dr. Bohm will meet with the Honors Colloquium to answer questions about voting, voter registration and any new proposals on the ballot. We hope to reach 200 students in each of these informational sessions.

We plan to hold another “make-and-take” event where attendees can make an LMC Votes! keychain in our FabLab. The activity will be free and encourage discussion about the upcoming

election. Previously, we had over 45 students attend and our goal is 100 attendees at the fall 2020 event, following Covid-19 social distancing restrictions.

The LMC Votes! program supports the college mission by providing community impact. LMC Votes! provides students, staff, faculty and community members an opportunity to collaborate and engage on non-partisan political matters. These collaborative relationships provide our students with mentors which in turn, develops local leaders and strong communication skills. Not only does the LMC Votes! program benefit civic engagement, but it develops citizen leaders for future success.

### Election Day/Get Out the Vote efforts

LMC participated in the National Study of Learning, Voting and Engagement (NSLVE) for the first time in 2016. NSLVE provided LMC's data from the 2014 election in preparation for our inaugural institution-wide activities during the 2016 election. LMC had a 17 percent voting rate in 2014 and with LMC Votes! efforts in fall 2016, LMC's voting rate improved by 18.2 percent to 35.2 percent (NSLVE Report, 2019). Our voter registration rate was fairly consistent between the two general elections with 60 percent and 61.7 percent respectively; however, the voting rate of registered students increased substantially from 28.4 percent to 57 percent (NSLVE Report, 2019). We believe efforts from LMC Votes! contributed to the increased voting rate of our registered students, staff and faculty. We intend to continue our campus and community activities to ensure these rates do not decrease, but rather continue to increase in the 2020 election. Our NSLVE report has not been posted to the LMC College website yet because we have recently completely a website re-design and overhaul. Dr. Bohm is currently working with Candice Elders, Director of Marketing, to have the NSLVE report posted to the college website.

Our goals for the 2020 election include:

- 45 percent (or higher) overall voting rate, an increase of 9.8 percentage points
- 90 percent (or higher) voting rate for newly registered voters, an increase of 33 percent

We will encourage students to vote and take a selfie outside of their precinct on November 3, 2020. Students who share their photos with an LMC Votes! social media account(s) will be entered to win a drawing/gift card to the student bookstore on campus. Facebook was less useful in 2018 so we are hopeful that Instagram and Twitter will be more accessible to our students.

In the evening of November 3, 2020, we will celebrate the election with a party in the Hawk's Nest. We will provide transportation from our satellite campuses to encourage participation. In 2018, we had 100 people attend; in 2020, our goal is to have 200 people attend the parties at various locations (Hawk's Nest, Bertrand Campus and/or local restaurant). We will provide food and snacks for all attendees. We will invite the clubs and organizations on campus to join us as well. Planning and attendance for these parties will depend on the Covid-19 restrictions being lifted or modifications made to provide any required social distancing (6 feet).

Our college leadership and administrators are supportive of LMC Votes! efforts. Going forward, we anticipate more involvement in activities as well as support in the form of college-wide emails from the President, attendance at events and joint media interviews related to voter registration and participation.

In 2018, LMC revised the college mission to include a Community Impact tenet. In conjunction with this new tenet of the mission, faculty are encouraged to include civic engagement and participation in Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) within their courses. During faculty orientation, Dr. Bohm presents all LMC Votes! event dates and program details so faculty can include in their course syllabi as well. During the 2021-2022 academic year, Dr. Bohm will collect and analyze all course syllabi that integrated civic engagement into their courses for co-curricular assessment. Following this assessment, feedback will be provided to faculty ahead of the 2022 mid-term election.

#### Anticipated Barriers for 2020

Some of the challenges we anticipate relate to this being a relatively new program. Additionally, the administrative organization has changed and will change again with pending retirements, transitions and new hires in the summer of 2020.

- We anticipate a new marketing system and a website is being created to facilitate an LMC Votes! blog
- We are looking for greater involvement from Student Life with the hiring of a new Dean in Student Affairs; previously this position did not exist.
- Covid-19 restrictions and guidance from the Governor may require us to conduct more informational sessions and outreach in a virtual environment. We will need to be flexible with our plans to be successful.

#### Spring & Fall 2021 and Spring 2022

Following the 2020 election, the CVP fellows will meet with Dr. Bohm to discuss best practices from the previous semester. We'll make plans for the mid-term election and prepare for a new selection of CVP fellows. Our CVP report will be filed and participation in any post-election parties, conferences and meetings will be dependent on Covid-19 restrictions being lifted.

Additionally, the short term and long term strategic goals for LMC Votes! will be evaluated. Any updates or changes to goals will be made at this time and a second review will be completed once the post-election NSLVE data has been received.

#### Program Leadership

Currently, Dr. Bohm is the faculty lead for LMC Votes! efforts which is also supported with two fellows from the Voter Friendly Campus program. LMC plans to continue this relationship for the foreseeable future. Additionally, we coordinate with the Student Senate each spring semester to recruit additional student leaders for the upcoming fall semester. Other faculty members participate in specific events related to their discipline and/or content specialty. A continuity plan is in place that should Dr. Bohm no longer fill this role; however, this is not anticipated. Since

our school is relatively small (under 4,000 students), we try to include all under-represented groups in our programming; however, since we have a transitional, predominantly commuter campus, our representation reflects the ever changing student body each year. We recruit members through the various clubs on campus and these include (for 2019-2020), the Latin Club, the Culinary Club, the African American Leadership Club, the Women's Business Club, and the Cosplay Club.

Point of Contact for LMC Votes!

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