

MARYLAND
INSTITUTE
COLLEGE
OF ART

M | I | C | A

ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge

ACTION PLAN



MAY 31, 2018

I. Executive Summary

The Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA) has a long history of incorporating civic learning and democratic engagement within its academic and public programs and the educational experience of its students.

MICA aspires to engage students in practices of critical thinking and action-based inquiry that prepares them to lead their lives as engaged creative citizens and professionals. This history of work demonstrates MICA's commitment to educating an informed citizenship, one equipped with the tools necessary to create and lead social change. Through the All-In Challenge MICA commits to the natural next step of translating democratic engagement and creative citizenship into tangibly increased student voting rates.

While the College's work is long-standing in this area, the modern version of MICA's democratic engagement began in 2015, when the College launched an effort to fundamentally rethink community engagement at MICA—from the place of civic learning within the college's mission and vision to the programmatic and administrative structures to support a culture of engagement at the College.

In 2016, a group of students formed a student interest group—the Political Engagement Club—and began working with local and national organizations aimed to increase student voter participation. The effort laid the foundation for the MICA Voter Access Initiative, a strategy to increase voter participation on campus. This initiative is a step in our longer-term strategic plan to integrate civic learning and action, as well as democratic engagement, throughout the institution.

The ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge aligns with our new mission— which emphasizes the

social, cultural, and economic impact of the arts—and allows us to join a national effort to institutionalize democratic engagement. We are integrating this work, among other initiatives, into the development of our new Center for Creative Citizenship, our First Year Forum, and a series of public events aimed at demonstrating the role of the arts in the ongoing defense and development of the principles and practices of democracy in the contemporary period.

We believe arts-based initiatives of this kind can serve as a platform for building sustainable organization, infrastructure and programming around creative citizenship, democratic practice, and the role of the arts in political and social action campaigns. MICA aims to cultivate creative citizens as art and design professionals who apply their skills, mindsets and vision to actively advance and support a healthier, more equitable society, sustainable communities and environment.

This plan serves as a review of the numerous assets in civic learning and democratic engagement that exist at MICA. It is also intended to serve as an organizing document to build and mobilize the various stakeholders who will be involved in our plans for near- and short-term measures. The Voter Access Initiative is a direct extension of the College's mission, lives within our broader plans for the launch of the Center for Creative Citizenship in Fall 2018, and speaks to the development of additional programs and initiatives aimed at creating a vibrant and sustainable culture of engagement at MICA.

II. Leadership

LEADERS OF MICA VOTER ACCESS INITIATIVE

David Bogen, Vice President and Provost
Academic Affairs

Mike Patterson, Vice President and Dean of Students
Student Affairs

TBD, Director
Center for Creative Citizenship

Hannah Shaw (MICA M.A. 2018), Coordinator
MICA Voter Access Initiative

Kate McGrain (MICA M.A. 2018), Coordinator
MICA Voter Access Initiative

WORK GROUP MEMBERS

Heather Slania, Director
MICA Decker Library

Allison Fisher, Manager
Globe Press

Becky Slogeris, Associate Director
MICA Center for Social Design

Maddie Wolfe, Student leader
Political Engagement Club

Jenn Ramsdell, Assistant Director of Transitions
Student Activities

Colette Veasey-Cullors, Associate Dean
Design and Media

Karol Martinez-Doane, Director
Student Activities

Firmin DeBrabander, Faculty and Constitution Day Program Director
Humanistic Studies

Valeria Fuentes, BFA'17, MA'18
Roots y Raices

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

B.U.I.L.D. (Baltimoreans United in Leadership Development)

Baltimore Votes

**Baltimore Collegetown Network Voter Education
Community of Practice**

Bmore Civic Action Campus Coalition

ROLE OF WORK GROUP

The role of the Voter Access Initiative work Group is to coordinate and amplify voter access initiatives and civic engagement opportunities across MICA's campus.

This work group arose organically from different organizations and offices on campus focused on voter education and electoral turnout and has met several times since the start of the 2017-18 academic year. In order to ensure a robust, connected and collaborative initiative, a core group of members will be working this summer to detail the full strategy and events for the 2018-19 school year and beyond. Once this foundation is laid, the larger group will work together to implement the strategic plan. We are currently completing our search for the Director of the newly established Center for Creative Citizenship, and this person will play a critical role in this effort.

III. Commitment

MICA's mission and institutional history of educational programming are underlying assets that provide a powerful foundation for developing an effective strategic plan for the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge.

In 2012, the Civility Task Force, composed of faculty and staff, led an initiative for the College to identify its core values. They worked deliberately and inclusively to identify values they perceived as central to the health of the MICA community. The following core values demonstrate our commitment:

- **Engagement:** As an educational community, we also understand the importance of engagement with the larger community of Baltimore and support MICA's multifaceted efforts and initiatives to collaborate with the communities within our city.
- **Community:** We also recognize that our community is a permeable one, strengthened and nourished by the relationships that connect MICA to the rest of Baltimore and the world.

In 2014-15, students, faculty and staff created the "Power and Equity Forum," a space for dialogue and organizing aimed at affecting cultural and structural change around issues of race, equity, and diversity at the College. Based on the recommendations of this group, College-wide task forces were convened on Community Engagement and Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Globalization (DEIG) during the 2015-16 academic year. The recommendations of these two task forces formed the basis for revisiting the College's mission and for the creation of the DEIG work plan and the development of MICA's Centers for Identity and Inclusion and Creative Citizenship.

During the 2016-17 academic year the College updated its mission and vision to better reflect and advance the role of MICA students in creating a more just and equitable world. Following are the new mission and vision statements that were approved by MICA's Board of Trustees in May, 2017:

- **Mission:** EMPOWER students to forge creative, purposeful lives and careers in a diverse and changing world. THRIVE with Baltimore. MAKE the world we imagine.
- **Vision:** A just, sustainable, and joyful world activated and enriched by artists, designers, and educators who are valued for their leadership and imagination.

For many artists, being engaged means acting as agents of social change. This desire is expressed through our faculty's and students' active participation in the many pan-institutional initiatives shaped around community engagement, social design, and sustainability. MICA also has several academic programs—including the MFA in Curatorial Practice, the MFA in Community Arts, the MA in Teaching, and the MA in Social Design, as well as numerous undergraduate majors—where partnered, community-based, and social practice strategies are central to the curriculum and the learning experience of our students. We take pride in the diversity of our students, faculty, and staff and in our long-standing commitment as an engaged and creative partner with the various communities, organizations, and publics of the City of Baltimore.

IV. Landscape

At MICA, students are active members of the campus community as well as engaged citizens of MICA's home, Baltimore City.

CLIMATE

Through a variety of clubs, campus events, disciplines, and grant opportunities, MICA students get involved—on and off campus—with issues that matter to them.

In 2016, with the launch of a new student interest group, the Political Engagement Club, these varied opportunities became more connected. The Political Engagement Club began working with local and national organizations focused on increasing student voter participation. This work grew throughout the 2016 Presidential Election season, including building broader connections to the Provost's Office, Globe Press, Student Affairs and Student Activities, (now all members of the Voter Access Initiative workgroup) and to key events on campus, such as Constitution Day.

Leaders of the Voter Access Initiative are mindful that nearly 25% of the student population are not eligible to vote in U.S. elections. MICA recognizes that voting is not the only way to measure civic engagement on campus. Accordingly, the work group intends the Voter Access Initiative to be the launch of a more robust, integrated, and sustainable approach to embed civic action throughout the institution.

PROGRAMMING

MICA's institutional student learning outcomes define the attributes that make MICA graduates successful. Through a unique integration of creativity, community and personal agency, MICA provides an educational experience that prepares graduates with the capacity to lead, to work with others and to make transformative contributions to the communities and society in which they will live and work. The following learning outcomes directly align with civic learning and democratic engagement and have historically provided the grounding for civic engagement work within the curriculum:

- Work effectively with diverse communities, locally and globally, through collaboration, empathy, curiosity and open-mindedness.
- Evaluate and respond to the social, ethical, and environmental impacts of their personal and creative choices.

In the wake of the task forces on community engagement and DEIG and the rearticulation of our mission and vision, MICA is currently engaged in a process of reviewing and redrafting its institutional student learning outcomes to more fully align with the explicit emphasis on the role of artists and designers as creative citizens and agents of constructive social change.

In addition, this past year MICA implemented a series of reforms to its First Year/Foundation programming including the establishment of

a new First Year Forum class that serves all first-year students, and provides them with a transdisciplinary thematic studio and liberal arts experience, in which they investigate ways of being a creative person in today's world. Beyond the first year, the MICA undergraduate experience includes a significant number of studio- and studies-based courses that allow students to extend their civic learning and community engagement opportunities, including community partnered courses in Sculpture, Painting, Illustration, Graphic Design, Product Design, Gaming, Art History and Ceramics.

This trend continues at the graduate level. Four of MICA's graduate programs boast curricula that are intentionally intertwined with community partners to address current and pressing social issues:

- **The Master of Arts in Social Design** connects students to project-based work with community partners. The program is driven by a deep commitment to social justice and equity and to increasing designers' awareness of the systemic power dynamics, policies and structures that enable social inequities and injustice to persist.
- **The Master of Fine Arts in Community Arts** prepares artists to define their art practice as a means of civic empowerment, community organizing and development, activism, education, and more. This program also host AmeriCorps Placements through the Community Art Collaborative which matches talented community artists with nonprofit organizations, schools, or community centers for a year-long residency.
- **The Master of Arts in Teaching** encourages students to examine the role of art education in schools, child development, and work in local Baltimore schools.

- **The Master of Fine Arts in Curatorial Practice** prepares students to determine how curators will shape the cultural life of our global society. A hands-on curriculum balancing socially engaged practices with academic research in history and theory become the foundation for exhibitions that raise awareness, bridge societal gaps, and catalyze exchanges across various disciplines, both inside and outside the artworld.

- **MICA's office of Community Engagement** (restructured to the Office of Creative Citizenship in summer 2018) offers grants to students, staff and faculty, to support projects that are done jointly with a community member or organization. In addition, the Community Art and Service program in Student Activities provides students opportunities to get involved in the Baltimore community in varying levels of engagement, volunteerism, and service.

MICA hosts many events and speakers to foster dialogue and education on current and relevant issues - at local, national, and international levels. Students have organized and led several voter registration campaigns (Rock the Vote, "Don't You Want To", National voting campaign, National Voter Registration Day).

Most notably, Constitution Day, celebrated every year, continues the College's tradition of leadership in raising and exploring the relationships between the arts, education, and the pressing social, cultural and political issues of our time/world today. Established in 2005, Constitution Day has evolved into two-day symposium that is open to the public and includes panels and commentary on contemporary issues in politics, government, civic engagement and activism.

ADDITIONAL ASSETS

MICA ASSETS + INITIATIVES

MICA Making Democracy: An initiative that advances MICA's Core Values and is responsive to changes in the cultural and political landscape that are taking place in our nation and in the world. It is also proactive, particularly for MICA's students as citizens of Baltimore who hold the future in their hands and strive to re-imagine the world. This initiative is supported by MICA's Offices of Academic Affairs, Graduate Studies, Student Affairs, and the Decker Library.

Baltimore Rising Youth Art: Inspired by the Baltimore Rising exhibition, a group of educators were brought together with a common desire to create a series of lessons for teachers working to engage their students in making art that responds to the conditions and events that led to the Baltimore Uprising and the impact on the city since. Resulting works made will be included in a curated online exhibition that will live on MICA's website.

Globe Press: MICA acquired this historical press in 2012 and now utilizes it as a "living archive" for teaching traditional print and poster-making and its relationship to political and cultural communication. Globe has been central to many of MICA's voter turnout efforts through the creation of posters, lawn signs, and other public communications collateral using the iconic colors and designs of Globe.



LOCAL INITIATIVES

Bmore Civic Campus Coalition: MICA, University of Maryland Baltimore County (UMBC), Loyola University Maryland, and Coppin State University are currently engaged with a team doing work and embedding civic action on Baltimore campuses. MICA's reps currently are Maddie Wolfe, Valeria Fuentes, Kate McGrain, and Hannah Shaw.

Baltimore Collegetown Network Voter Education Community of Practice: Meeting of Baltimore-area universities that are all working on civic engagement and voter education efforts on their respective campus.

Roots & Raices: A platform for artists and musicians to celebrate the importance of immigrants in the United States. This platform was founded by Valeria Fuentes, BFA'17, MA'18.

Artist Within: "A coalition of award-winning interdisciplinary arts and activist organizations engaged with social practice worked with Station North Arts & Entertainment, Inc., the Central Baltimore Partnership, and MICA's [Baltimore Art + Justice Project](#) to bring new energy to the sophisticated community development efforts underway in the Station North Arts & Entertainment District. Working with local residents ranging from middle school students to senior citizens, the coalition activated and cultivated the artists, designers, and performers within these communities with the intention of increasing local participation in the arts and in community development efforts."

The Baltimore Art + Justice Blog: "A place for artists, advocates, researchers, community members and granters to talk about the impact of community art on Baltimore neighborhoods. By sharing resources, ideas and even a few solutions, the Baltimore Art + Justice blog opens a much needed dialogue among our communities that will help us build a Better, More Just Baltimore."

NATIONAL INITIATIVES

Campus Compact: “A national coalition of 1,000+ colleges and universities committed to the public purposes of higher education. [They] build democracy through civic education and community development.” MICA is part of the mid-Atlantic Regional Campus Compact, and we participate in the SAGE network, as well as regional and national meetings. We also currently have a full-time VISTA/Americorps staff-person and have had a series of Newman Fellows in Civic Engagement through the Compact.

For Freedoms: A 50 state, non-partisan, initiative to use art as a means to inspire broad civic participation. Includes a billboard campaign, lawn signs, town halls, etc. inclusive of branding which we can either use, adapt, or not use. MICA is the point of locus in Maryland (we have signed on institutionally) for this work. At MICA, this initiative is led by Colette Veasey-Cullors, Associate Dean, and Hank Willis Thomas, a photo conceptual artist working primarily with themes related to identity, history and popular culture.

ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge: “A national awards program. By recognizing colleges and universities for their commitment to increasing student voting rates, the Challenge encourages higher education institutions to help students form the habits of active and informed citizenship, make democratic participation a core value on their campus, and cultivate generations of engaged citizens who are essential to a healthy democracy.”

Students Learn Students Vote Coalition: “[The coalition] promotes civic learning and engagement on campuses across the country by providing a series of key steps and information on best practices that institutions can use to create a more voter friendly campus.”

National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement report (NSLVE): “[NSLVE] offers colleges and universities an opportunity to learn their student registration and voting rates and, for interested campuses, a closer examination of their campus climate for political learning and engagement, as well as correlations between specific student learning experiences and voting. More than 1,000 campuses across the country are enrolled in this first-of-its-kind study which provides us a research database that includes nearly half of all college students in the United States.”

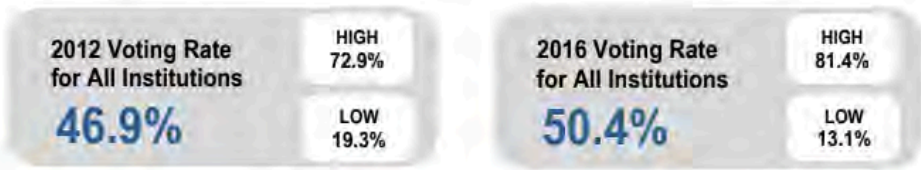
STUDENT ENGAGEMENT DATA

Highlights from MICA's 2012 and 2016 NSLVE Report:

- 2016 Voting rate 56.8%, up 14.9 from 2012, 6.4% above national average for 2016
- Early voting participation doubled in 4 years
- Mail in voting participation tripled in 2016 (2.1% to 6.7%)
- Increase in voter participation across all age groups in 2016.
- Registration rate: 86.4% up from 76% in 2012
- Other private institutions in 2016 - 51.5%

HOW YOUR NUMBERS COMPARE | PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

By Carnegie Classification

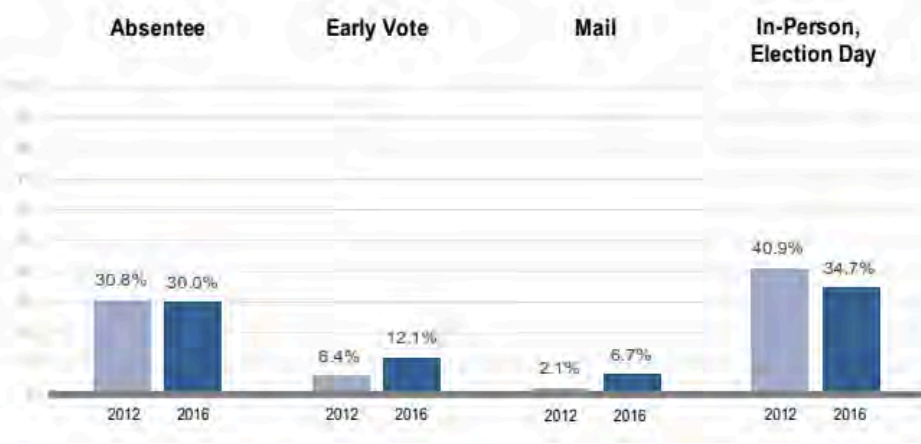


Difference from All Institutions: **-4.96** (2012) / **+6.4** (2016)



YOUR STUDENTS' VOTING DATA | PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

By Voting Method*



V. Goals

VISION

MICA grows with Baltimore in cultivating a community that is informed and actively involved in civic and democratic engagement.

LONG-TERM GOALS (2026 Strategic Plan)

In the long-term, we aim to support students in developing as lifelong active citizens, community members, artists, and educators.

Civic engagement and active voter participation are embedded within MICA at an institutional-level.

- Increase awareness, opportunities, and participation for students to actively engage in their community: locally, nationally, globally
 - Increase voting rate to over 75% for eligible voters for the 2024 Presidential Election
 - Connect this work to the larger mission-based project of contributing to the social, cultural, and economic development of the City of Baltimore
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MID-TERM GOALS

The mid-term goals focus on broader civic engagement to include all MICA students - voters and those who are not eligible to vote.

- Develop and utilize metrics to assess civic engagement (awareness, opportunities, and participation) beyond voter participation (2020)
 - Increase voting rate to over 65% for eligible voters for the 2020 Presidential Election
 - Complete rearticulation of institutional student learning outcomes, elevating civic engagement (Fall 2019)
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MID-TERM GOALS (2018 Midterm Elections)

Our short-term goals are focused on voter participation and are part of our MICA Voter Access Initiative. Using the 2014 Midterm Election NSLVE report, we have determined the following goals for the upcoming 2018 Midterm Election.

- Voting Rate (Voter Turnout):** Increase by 10 points, from 16% to 26%
 - Registration Rate:** Increase by 10 points, from 59% to 69%
 - Voting Rate of Registered Students:** Increase by 10 points, from 27% to 37%
-

NEAR-TERM ACTIONS
(Summer 2018)

Plan for Fall 2018:

- Identify roles, responsibilities, and ownership:** Create an interdisciplinary team on campus to carry out the action plan and move this work forward.
- Coordinate and align existing efforts:** Develop a unifying strategy that incorporates the numerous efforts that already exist on campus and in Baltimore.
- Hire Director for the Center for Creative Citizenship**
- Create an action plan for the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge:** Participate in the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge in the 2018-2019 academic year. Develop a plan that leverages existing programs, identifies new initiatives, and determines a strategy to access and improve our actions.

VI. Strategy

DESIGN PRINCIPLES

We developed a set of design principles to ensure our initiative and its many parts reflect the needs, wants, and interests of the MICA community. We will refer to these principles as we build, implement, and evaluate our strategy.

INCLUSIVE. Create events, programs, and information that are relevant to all students, whether or not they are eligible to vote.

COLLABORATIVE. Maintain an interdisciplinary work group that includes student, staff, and community partners.

COMMUNITY-MINDED. Involve community partners and MICA neighbors in planning and implementation.

COLLECTIVELY ASSESSED. Provide opportunities for MICA community to give feedback on Voter Access Initiative and other opportunities; update programming to reflect that input.

TIMELINE

NEAR-TERM

(Summer 2018)

These agendas will be workshopped this summer and will require ongoing efforts throughout the academic year.

Identify roles, responsibilities, and ownership: Create an interdisciplinary team on campus to carry out the action plan and move this work forward.

- Convene work group meetings, list events, dates and key offices/ work group members involved

Coordinate and align existing efforts: Develop a unifying strategy that incorporates the numerous efforts that already exist on campus and in Baltimore.

- Finalize orientation materials, include information about voter registration, events on campus
- Assign First Year summer read - connected to civic action - and develop reading guide
- Plan with First-Year Experience staff about how they will incorporate civic learning and democratic engagement into programming
- Create welcome packet for students and parents
- Confirm TurboVote

Create an Action Plan for the ALL IN Campus Democracy

Challenge: Participate in the ALL IN Challenge in the 2018-2019 academic year. Develop a plan that leverages existing programs, identifies new initiatives, and determines a strategy to access and improve our actions.

- Submit a draft of the action plan by May 31st
- Continue to update the plan as work progresses

SHORT-TERM
(2018 Midterm Elections)

Awareness:

- Create Globe Posters to be posted across campus
- Educate all department chairs and faculty on the ALL IN campaign. Establish a week when faculty are encouraged to mention ALL IN in class
- Meet with MICA Strategic Communications Department
- Leverage existing email platforms (weekly updates, grad community, RA, Graduate Program Assistants)
- #TakeThePrimaryStep Campaign - do a social media take over day discussing the importance of voting and civic activism
- Identify key contacts, create platform for students and staff to easily get questions answered
- Have different groups, departments, classes do Instagram takeovers reminding students to register and/or vote
- Other

Opportunities:

- Have materials at orientation and for all returning students
- Have multiple tables for voter registration + more information at all campus activities fairs

Participation:

- Designate one person to coordinate voting registration activities
- Align efforts to TurboVote
- Create pamphlets/quick guides on how to register for absentee
- Leverage existing Constitution Day to incorporate materials on registering to vote and how to vote

Evaluation:

- Collect feedback from students
- Evaluate 2018-19 year with TurboVote

MID-TERM
(2019-2026)

Awareness:

- Create a comprehensive calendar of all existing events related to voting and civic engagement
- Establish civic participation as a central component of programming and initiatives at the Center for Creative Citizenship
- Create sustainable presence for these activities in orientation, forum, and other key components of the FYE
- Finish development of new ILOs and integrate this work into the 2018-19 Strategic Planning process

Opportunities:

- Integrate new ILOs into program review and planning and development documents for all academic programs
- Connect and integrate civic learning/engagement agenda with DEIG work plans across campus

Participation:

- Through the Center for Creative Citizenship, establish seed grants targeting the development of civic learning and community-based curriculum development projects

Evaluation:

- Assess and Evaluate programs and events
- Collect Insights and ideas from students & community
- Conduct In-depth interviews and brainstorming sessions with students will provide additional information (not included in the current voter participation data) that is more inclusive to the entire student body
- Determine assessment metrics so that we can continue to measure and improve our efforts

LONG-TERM
(2026 INSTITUTIONAL
STRATEGIC PLAN)

Our long-term planning is focused on the development and launch of the new Center for Creative Citizenship, the development of projects, initiatives and public events associated with the Center, and the integration of our work on civic learning and public engagement into the educational frameworks and Strategic Plan of the College.

The development of MICA's 2026 Strategic Plan will formally begin in the Fall of 2018, and will incorporate the work on community engagement, DEIG, and mission and vision that has taken place over the last several years at MICA. Since this work will follow the principles (inclusive, collaborative, community-minded, collectively assessed) identified above, it needs to be understood as highly open-ended and evolving in the context of this understanding of our aspirations for growth and development as an organization and as an educational community in the City of Baltimore.

Long-term Opportunities may include:

- Student Voter/Democratic Engagement Education Week
- Ongoing speaker series, in partnership with other universities and/or community initiatives
- Continue to increase the number of students, faculty, and staff engaged in voter access and turnout events and initiatives.
- Continue to build our collaboration with other local colleges and universities and civic participation networks to broaden efforts around voter access and turnout
- Collect feedback from students, community partners and neighbors through interviews, surveys, and workshops

VII. Reporting

This plan will live within the Center for Creative Citizenship. In keeping with the institution's strategic planning process, the strategies and goals outlined in this document will be assessed quarterly by the Voter Access Initiative Work Group.

This plan will be available on MICA's website and incorporated, as appropriate or requested, into reports to the MICA community (students, staff, faculty and external community members). We will also share the NSLVE data/report, updates, and information through the Center for Creative Citizenship and other MICA news outlets.

VIII. Evaluation

In addition to using the NSLVE reports to assess the impact of MICA's Voter Access Initiative, the work group will collect feedback throughout the campaign. Evaluation and feedback opportunities will be integrated into each event. And attendance will be tracked at each of the events.

Evaluations and attendance reports will be collected by the work group/Center for Creative Citizenship. Data will be reviewed and evaluated to note engagement, opinions, impact, and gaps in the campaign.

A comprehensive evaluation of the year and this action plan will be completed at the end of the 2018-19 academic year.

Long-term, comparison to previous years data will be an indicator of success (increased attendance, improved voter turnout rates, etc.). This 2018-19 Action Plan will set the baseline data with which the College will be able to evaluate programming.

Quantitative measures may include:

- Number of “check your voter registration” cards and “how to vote absentee” flyers distributed
- Number of students who register to vote or change their registration to Baltimore
- Number of events related to civic learning and democratic engagement
- Attendance at civic learning and democratic engagement events in Academic Year 2018-19
- Number of students taken to the polls on Election Day (if appropriate)
- Number of reactions/engagement in social media takeovers
- Number of absentee ballot request forms and absentee ballots mailed by the University
- Other measures as they come available

Qualitative measures may include:

- Feedback from Voter Access Initiative workgroup, faculty, and staff that identify successful strategies and areas for improvement
- Success in implementing new strategies, such as securing reminders on Canvas, faculty/dean involvement or locating a polling place on campus
- Feedback from individuals working with targeted groups on success of reaching these groups