For the 2020 election cycle, Macalester is engaging students through many avenues. Due to the pandemic, fewer students are on campus, and the ability to hold in-person events has diminished. For this reason, creativity has been the most important resource for our election engagement goals this year. By increasing collaboration, planning quickly, and utilizing a more imaginative approach, the college hopes to not only increase voter turnout, but increase awareness of other forms of democratic engagement.

The first step to creating our plan for this unprecedented semester was to meet in our election engagement cohort, Mobilize Mac. Mobilize Mac is a group of students, staff, and faculty who want to be involved in planning Macalester’s election preparation and response. Meeting at least once a month starting in August, the group works to identify what election efforts are planned around campus and how to fill in the gaps. We discussed possible collaborations between academic and extracurricular departments, student organizations, and community organizations, and formed groups to connect further on events and make them happen. The group is vital to all steps of campus engagement: creativity, collaboration, and implementation.

The following is a list of events and initiatives we developed to help us meet our goals. This list has been circulated at several events and the campaigns and events have been publicized in Macalester’s daily newsletter as well as email newsletters targeted towards students interested in such opportunities.

Events:

Orientation: Detailed info about elections and voting was shared in the online portal as a required part of new student orientation
September 22: Pi Sigma Alpha Zoom on the passing of RBG and the election
October 4: Democracy Matters Zoom for answering questions on voting plans
Various October dates: Voter Registration and Planning tables
Various October dates: Chalk the Vote, Paint the Rock on campus about election
Various Dates: “Choose Democracy” Training offered to prepare for post-election period
Mid-October: Window poster contest “The election is important to me because…”
Election day hotline to assist with any questions, voting issues
Election day Voting signs on public intersections and signs on campus--student organized

Initiatives:

All-In Challenge: participate in
Mobile Mac Webpage
Share Widely MN Votes and All In resources related to registration, voting
Weekly Election and Voting Updates in Macalester’s daily newsletter and on social media
Mac-Groveland Podcast about the election
Why Vote videos--Political Science department and leaders from across campus: share widely on social media
Publicize Google doc with volunteer engagement opportunities related to election
Organize Agent Ballot Delivery for students in isolation or quarantine on election day
Specific outreach to international students, DACA students, etc. about election education, issues, and concerns
Faculty: Letter and resources to address election in all classes
Publicize Voting Rights and Accessibility resources and regulations related to election
No synchronous classes or activities on election day
Voter logistics message emailed to all students living on campus

After the Election:

Group meeting focused on post-election period--leaders from across campus
  Prepare for clear results, uncertain results, and contested results
Hold spaces immediately after campus to emotionally and intellectually process election results and aftermath
Choose Democracy training attended by wide variety of Macalester individuals-prepared to utilize
International Roundtable event 10 days after election will have intentional spaces to discuss and process election