

Macomb Community College 2024 Nonpartisan Democratic Engagement Action Plan

Developed by:

Abdullah Aljanabi – Student, President of Civic Engagement Alliance, Democracy Fellow
Nicole McKee – Director, Government and Institutional Relations – President’s Office

Executive Summary:

Macomb Community College is committed to providing learning opportunities that lead to better-informed and engaged citizens. Over the past two years, the college has ramped up these efforts by securing speakers, serving as a venue for elected officials, and fostering a dedicated coalition for student-voting initiatives.

Despite these efforts, voting remains relatively low among students. According to the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement, midterm election turnout among registered Macomb students has increased compared to other election cycles but falls short of the national average. While these numbers are somewhat disappointing, the overall trend is in the desired direction. In the most recent general election, our institution retained notable growth in voting rates among registered Macomb Community College students, with 62 percent of eligible students casting a vote in 2020.

These improvements are progress however there is more work to be done. Macomb Community College is committed to providing opportunities for the students to engage in voter and civic activities fostering leadership at the college and within the community. Macomb Community College is the only place of higher education in Macomb County, so it is important that we remain a place for discussion, engagement and education on topics such as democracy, voting and civic leadership.

Leadership:

Macomb Community College is engaging faculty and staff members to build a coalition of participants in this work. The participants represent diverse areas throughout the campus,

including faculty from the Political Science Department and representatives from Student Life and Leadership, Marketing, Executive Leadership and Government Relations.

Diane Banks – Director, Macomb Community College Foundation
Kevin Chandler – Vice President, College Advancement and Community Relations
Carrie Jeffers – Vice President, Student Services
Bryan Kingry - Professor, Department of Sociology
Ryan Kostanecki - Professor, Department of Political Science
Nicole McKee - Director, Government and Institutional Relations
Jeanne Nicol - Executive Director of Communications and Public Relations
JT Neuffer - Executive Director, Provost Office
Marie Pritchett - Dean, Arts and Sciences
Mark Trueman - Professor, Department of Economics
Jamie Valente - Manager, Student Life and Leadership
William Wood – Director, Cultural Affairs and Community Engagement

In addition, Macomb Community College recruited students into the coalition. These efforts were led by our campus Democracy Fellow and Michigan Secretary of State Collegiate Liaison, Abdullah Aljanabi, through the Campus Vote Project.

Commitment:

Macomb Community College’s long-time commitment can be found in the mission statement which is: *Transform lives and communities through the power of education, enrichment and economic development.* When college leadership and the Board of Trustees reviewed and confirmed their commitment to this mission they revamped the vision statement for the college as well. The commitment to our community is reflected in the statement of: *Macomb Community College will be a leader in higher education, improving society through innovative learning experiences that create pathways for personal advancement and drive economic vitality.*

The student voter engagement efforts and the broader work in civic engagement ties directly to the commitment of improving society, pathways to personal advancement and driving economic vitality. The President of Macomb also intentionally moved the work of the Civic Engagement Committee listed above into the President’s office to lead the overall college efforts. This decision was made to ensure that the President’s office was engaged in all aspects of engagement efforts and to emphasize the importance of a cross-college approach versus the previous silos of activities.

The President and leadership commitment to voter and civic engagement activities is exhibited through the unwavering support of the efforts outlined in this report.

Landscape:

Michigan has undergone several substantial changes to election laws and voting rights, and it remains our primary goal to ensure our community understands these changes. For example, Michigan Election Law now allows all eligible and registered voters to request an absentee ballot without providing a reason. Michigan also now allows for Early Voting. This enables voters to vote in person before an election at a designated early voting site for all State-wide and Federal elections. We expect these to promote student voting through these efforts:

- Create a Student Voter Guide with information on absentee voting in Michigan.
- Provide copies of absentee voter applications at Student Life and Leadership offices
- Email students, faculty, and staff will include links to the absentee ballot applications.
- The CEA student organization will guide efforts to educate students on voting procedures and ballot information.
- Create a Student Voter Guide that includes information regarding early voting deadlines, finding your polling location, and identification requirements.

Macomb Community College joined the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge in 2024. Our institution is the largest community college in Michigan with a diverse student body. Macomb has authorized the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) through 2033 and will receive campus voting data in the future from Tufts University. According to the data from NSLVE, midterm election turnout among registered Macomb students has increased compared to other election cycles but falls short of the national average. In 2014, the voting rate for Macomb students was 19.7 percent. By 2018, the number increased to 34.1 percent but fell below the national average of 39 percent for all institutions. The younger the students, the less likely they were to vote. Those aged 18-21 doubled their participation from 15 percent in 2014 to 30 percent in 2018, while the rate for students over fifty increased from 53 to 65 percent.

While these numbers are somewhat disappointing, the overall trend is in the desired direction. In the most recent general election, our institution retained notable growth in voting rates among registered Macomb Community College students, with 62 percent of eligible students casting a vote in 2020. Although this was slightly below the national average of 66 percent for all institutions, it represents a positive trend for voter mobilization efforts on campus. We saw roughly a 16.7 percent increase in our students' voting rates compared to the last two general elections, in 2016 and 2012. The improvement among different age groups is particularly noteworthy. In 2020, younger voters aged 18-21 achieved an impressive 65 percent turnout, a substantial increase from approximately 38 percent in 2012 and 2016. Additionally, students aged over fifty showed even higher engagement, with turnout reaching 74% in 2020. We have not yet received updated information for the most recent mid-term and primary elections, but we are hopeful about the results. Overall, Michigan experienced comparatively high voter

turnout rates in both the 2022 mid-term election and the 2024 primary election. To increase voter engagement and civic leadership, Macomb has implemented, supported and planned many activities over the last year.

The college developed several civic engagement speaker series, which have brought nationally recognized thought leaders to our campus. In the past few years, these speakers have included New York Times' Nicolas Kristoff, Time Magazine's Joe Klein, the Washington Posts' EJ Dionne, legendary journalists Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein, and US Treasury Secretaries Larry Summers and Janet Yellen.

- February 2024, Macomb Community College hosted Carol Graham, senior fellow from the Brookings Institution, for a discussion on the power and science of hope in elevating community well-being

Efforts to push voter education also include our recent conference in collaboration with Oakland University's Center for Civic Engagement. Political Science faculty panelists did question-and-answer sessions regarding the Presidential Primary.

Macomb Community College also has a history of serving as a site for national candidates and elected officials. The College has hosted every U.S. president since Ronald Reagan. President Barack Obama visited the campus twice during his two terms in office. In the 2016 elections, the College was the site of two Donald Trump events and one Bernie Sanders event. Given the political significance of Michigan and Macomb County, we expect the College to remain a popular stop on presidential candidates' campaign trails for the 2024 general elections.

Goals:

Macomb Community College's nonpartisan democratic engagement goals for the 2024 general elections are:

- Increase the number of students registered to vote.
 - Invite the Secretary of State Mobile Branch Office to Macomb campuses.
 - Collaborate with local non-partisan democratically engaged organizations and clerk offices.
- Increase the number of students who vote.
- Recruit election inspectors to participate in the voting process during elections.
- Mobilize civic participation activities on campuses.

Strategy:

Macomb Community College will implement the following strategies and activities to increase nonpartisan democratic engagement and student voter participation.

Voter Registration

- Ongoing partnership with TurboVote to offer convenient access to voter registration and election updates. The promotion of TurboVote remains ongoing on campus and is accessible through MyMacomb, the student portal.
- Email sent to all students, faculty, and staff encouraging students to register to vote and providing them with the link to our turbo vote page on the following occasions:
 - National Voter Registration Day (week of September 17th)
 - Voter Registration Deadlines
- On-Campus Registration Drives:
 - Offer TurboVote computer access on National Voter Registration Day (Sept. 17th) at the Student Life Center, with the Macomb County Clerk's office on hand to help check voting statuses, register voters, and emphasize the importance of voting.
 - Invite the Secretary of State Mobile Branch Office to Macomb campuses on Fall Fest 2024.
 - Student members in Civic Engagement Alliance plan to provide voter registration and preregistration forms during the college's "Welcome Week" starting August 19th.
 - In the Fall, we will continue collaborating with League of Women Voters members within the non-partisan organization Our Time to do on-campus voter registration drives on campus and near local high schools to register and preregister students to vote. Our Time organization has done tabling sessions in nineteen institutions, including Macomb Community College, from 02/2024-05/2024, retaining 568 registered and pre-registered students. Macomb's student-voting coalition plans to strengthen harmony with this group to offer accessible voter registration opportunities to our community.
 - Promote voter registration deadlines and encourage voting through online engagement. Student Life and Leadership will lead marketing efforts to inform students about election processes and important dates.
 - Publish a guest column in the Campus Blog on National Voter Registration Day in collaboration with our democracy fellow and marketing.
 - Feature the newly established MyMacomb student web portal, "Michigan Voter Information - Your Vote. Your Voice." on social media and virtual platforms to provide easy access to voter registration information and resources.

- Macomb faculty and staff promote non-partisan sites for information on national, state, and local elections on the web-based learning management system Canvas.

Voter Education

In 2024, Macomb will continue these efforts:

- The James Jacobs Civic Engagement Project
 - Engage faculty members in identifying topics/speakers that would be of interest to Macomb students.
- Partnering with League of Women Voters on a June 27 congressional forum for District 10.
- Constitution Day Activities
 - Local Judge/historian to speak on campus.
- Election Night Watch Party
 - Macomb will host an election night watch party for students (November)
- Washington DC Visit
 - May 2024, Professor Kingry will lead the trip to Washington, DC.
- Civic Engagement Alliance (CEA) non-partisan student organization members will continue efforts to promote democratic engagement activities and educational series on campus during their monthly meetings and tabling engagements at conferences and events.
 - Beginning in the fall, CEA will host workshops and Dinners for Democracy on Michigan's electoral process, ballot processes, and voting rights.
 - CEA will lead voter education week from October 7 to 11, organizing informational sessions about the electoral process and collaborating with voting activist speakers.
 - Partner with the Macomb County Clerk and the Warren City Clerk to host a workshop providing information on working the polls ahead of the November election for recruitment efforts.
 - On November 4th, CEA will celebrate Election Hero Day by honoring election inspectors and emphasizing the work of election workers to ensure the electoral processes run efficiently.
- Collaborating With Universities in Civic Engagement Efforts
 - Invited professors from Oakland University's Center for Civic Engagement for a speaker event, Presidential Primary Update Post-Super Tuesday
 - Plans to continue the partnership in the future.
 - Voting Information Tables will be set up on major events such as Welcome Week, Fall Fest, and the annual Halloween Party.

- Civic Engagement Gatherings and Student-Voting Initiatives
 - On June 4-7th, Macomb’s Democracy Fellow plans to attend the annual Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement Meeting. This conference is to develop effective strategies for civic learning and democratic engagement.
 - On September 20th, Professor Kostanecki, Macomb’s Fellow Abdullah, and interested students plan to attend Michigan’s Student Voting Summit. Wayne State University and the Campus Vote Project host this event. This event provides pertinent information about changes to student voting rights in Michigan and a networking opportunity with students across the state about mobilizing civic engagement opportunities.
 - Resuming in the Fall, the ‘MI Student Vote’ project under the auspices of Michigan’s Secretary of State will hold statewide virtual calls, co-led by Macomb’s democracy fellow. This is an effort to increase voter turnout statewide, and Macomb students are invited to join—to ask questions and hear from expert panelists regarding voting matters.

- Engagement and Outreach Efforts
 - In August-September 2024, Macomb’s democracy fellow will continue classroom presentations to classes for recruiting efforts and educating classmates about the 2024 general election.
 - Macomb’s fellow will work with faculty and staff to highlight informational videos about the civic engagement efforts on campus and election updates to get previewed to virtual and in-person students.
 - Members of the coalition will present the Democracy Fellowship opportunity to new student orientation each year, starting in the fall.
 - Continue promotional material about the Civic Engagement Alliance student organization around campus.

Evaluation:

Macomb Community College has authorized the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE), and we will use our campus voting data will function as the main evaluation tool of our action plan and nonpartisan democratic engagement efforts. The Civic Engagement Committee at Macomb will also review and debrief each of the events and partnerships listed above to evaluate their success. We will measure reach in promotion through reviewing activity attendance lists. This will help us measure if we are reaching new people through communication efforts. The committee will also survey attendees, when applicable, to gather their thoughts and ideas regarding successes and opportunities for improvement.

Reporting:

Our campus action plan will be posted on our campus page on ALL IN's website <https://allinchallenge.org/campuses/macomb-community-college/>.

Macomb Community College has given ALL IN permission to publish our past NSLVE reports, which can also be found on our campus page above.

Macomb will also post reports generated for and from NSLVE, ALL In and Campus Vote Project on our staff and student portals as well as our voting information pages on the college website: macomb.edu.