

Madison Area Technical College
ALL IN Challenge
Civic Learning & Voter Engagement Plan

I. Executive Summary

This plan for 2020 is the first Civic Learning and Voter Engagement Plan created for Madison College. Program Advisors Ellie Rome and Brianna Stapleton Welch, who work in the Center for Student Life, wrote this plan. At this time, the plan has been written to focus specifically on engaging the Madison College community, primarily students, outside of the classroom because this is within the scope of the mission of Student Life.

This plan sets out our goals, action steps, and strategies related to student voter engagement, education, and turnout. These are new initiatives for Student Life, though different student groups previously did some of this type of programming at the College. This plan will be the roadmap for this first year of programming, setting out our goals, strategies, and action steps to work toward those goals.

II. Leadership

Madison College's Center for Student Life will facilitate civic learning, voter registration, and voter education programming leading up to the November 2020 elections. Program Advisors Ellie Rome and Brianna Stapleton Welch will implement the programs and activities in this plan. This plan will be shared with Vice President of Student Affairs Dr. Howard Spearman and Director of Student Life Renee Alfano for input & oversight. We will also connect with Dr. Tim Casper, Vice President of Institutional Research and Effectiveness, on topics related to government relations.

Student leadership will be essential to building engaging programming leading up to the November 2020 election. We will apply for the Campus Election Engagement Project (CEEP) so that we can hire a student fellow to plan and carry out programming.

Commitment:

Since the Center for Student Life supports student involvement beyond the classroom, this action plan will focus on ongoing Madison College commitments to extracurricular civic learning and engagement. We recognize the opportunity to expand to curricular engagement opportunities in the future by building relationships with other departments at the College.

Madison College has demonstrated its commitment to civic learning and democratic engagement by dedicating space and staff time to an on-campus early voting location during elections starting in 2019. The Intercultural Exchange, a student-centered space that welcomes and validates the diverse cultures of our student body, opened in 2017. Groups that use the Intercultural Exchange for meetings or programming must connect their activities to its core themes, one of which is civic engagement. Each year, the College commemorates National Constitution Day activities in accordance with federal requirements. The Center for Student Life implements Constitution Day activities and encourages students to learn more about the Constitution and how they can be civically active.

Civic learning in the form of service to the community is supported by the Volunteer Center, a student organization. Their mission is to facilitate service learning and volunteer opportunities that will further enhance the classroom educational experience and impact the community, creating an environment that cultivates student success. However, these service-learning experiences are not typically connected to advocacy, policy, or democratic learning.

Students have the opportunity to build civic engagement skills by getting involved in the governance of the college. Madison College has a Shared Governance model that promotes participation, partnership and a renewed commitment to excellence. There is a College Assembly that is charged with overseeing the entire Shared Governance system. Within this structure, there are eight councils that make recommendations on specific issues to the College Assembly. Each council includes a student representative. The Student Senate is another venue in which students can strengthen civic engagement. The Student Senate works collaborative with fellow students and the Shared Governance model to create positive changes at Madison College. The Student Senate represents the interest of all students, promotes student and faculty understanding, participates in community affairs that concern students, and encourages students to become involved in educational and social activities of Madison College.

Of the current civic engagement opportunities offered by Madison College, most are focused on internal campus activities and the college's governance. The College could strengthen its commitment to extracurricular civic learning connected to local, county, state, and national issue government. The Center for Student Life is demonstrating renewed commitment to civic engagement by allocating staff time and department resources to civic learning and voter education opportunities through the ALL IN Challenge.

I. Landscape:

In November 2019, Madison College was awarded the Best In Class award from the ALL IN Challenge for having the highest student voter turnout of large two-year institutions participating in the Challenge in 2018. The student voter rate for the 2018 midterm elections was 53.5%, which is 14.4% higher than the national average for students at colleges participating in the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE). Looking back to the last General Election year, in 2016, the Madison College student voting rate was 56.7%. Although not as significant as the difference in 2018, this rate was also higher than the national average of 50.4%.

The high voter registration and turnout percentages from 2018 sets a high bar for 2020, particularly because staff, time, and monetary resources were not dedicated to voter education, registration, and turnout in any significant way prior to 2019. As of January 2019, these efforts have been added into the responsibilities of the staff members completing this report on behalf of Madison College.

Several new initiatives have begun at the College in 2019 related to voter engagement. First, the College became an In-Person Absentee Voting partner (also called "Early Voting") for all elections happening in the City of Madison, hosting early voting at two of the Madison campuses. This partnership originated within the office of Organizational Excellence, with coordination quickly moving to Student Life. The first two elections during which the College served as an early voting location were in February and April of 2019. Between those two elections, 141 people came to one of our campuses to complete their in-person absentee ballots: 54 people voted in February, and 87 ahead of the April election. In 2020, Madison College will serve as an In-Person Absentee polling location leading up to the elections in February, April, August, and November. This partnership with the City Clerk's Office will be critical for reaching our registration and turnout goals for 2020.

In addition to serving as an early voting location, Student Life has begun to host programs related to voting. The first program was hosted on National Voter Registration Day in September 2019 at two of the Madison College campuses. This event was a collaborative effort with the League of Women Voters and the Madison City Clerk's Office. In addition to voter registration, we coordinated some educational activities. 35 people registered to vote or initiated their registration on this day, and 75 people participated in our activities. This was a great first program, though we have many ideas for improvement in the future. Similar events will be hosted ahead of the April and November elections in 2020.

Our partnership with the League of Women Voters is crucial to our success going into 2020 for several reasons. First, the volunteers in this organization are highly knowledgeable and experienced in navigating the complicated voter identification laws in Wisconsin. They are helping us to not only register students to vote, but also make institutional changes that will simplify the registration process for students who need to show proof of address via smart phones. We are also grateful for their partnership because of the number of volunteers they are able to send for our registration events. There is limited staff capacity to host an engaging event and register students simultaneously, so having the League of Women Voters send many volunteers is essential for these events.

We are working to overcome several barriers that stand in our way toward accomplishing our goals. The student population of Madison College includes a large population of people under the age of 18 because we offer dual-enrollment programs with local high schools. These students have already expressed interest in voting during our National Voter Registration Day event in September 2019, so we will need to be cognizant of their involvement in our community and need to find activities that they can participate in outside of voter registration and voting.

Another challenge that we face is that the College is spread across parts of 12 counties in southcentral Wisconsin, representing hundreds of municipalities. Each municipality’s clerk has the liberty to make certain decisions about administering elections and managing voter registrations for that municipality. For example, the City of Madison hosts In-Person Absentee polling at many locations across the city ahead of every election, but we do not know of any other municipalities in the district that have In-Person Absentee polling outside of the clerk’s office. This difference, along with those related to registration, make it challenging to be informed enough to assist all students to fully understand the registration and voting procedures for their municipality.

Madison College’s Campus Election Engagement Assessment

This tool, developed by the Campus Election Engagement Project, allows us to assess where Madison College already has strong election engagement structures in place, and to identify where we can focus our efforts as we develop opportunities leading up to the 2020 elections.

Part 1 – Campus Commitment	Yes or No?	Current Efforts & Opportunities to Grow
1. A coalition of faculty, staff, and students regularly meets to coordinate efforts and resources across campus to register, educate, and empower students to vote in local, state, and federal elections.	No	There is an opportunity build an ad hoc team to coordinate efforts during major election years. This could include student leaders with an interest in this area, and possibly a CEEP fellow.
2. At least one staff or faculty member coordinates and tracks election engagement efforts across campus.	Yes	Ellie Rome & Brianna Stapleton Welch in the Center for Student Life have been charged with coordinating election engagement efforts.
3. Our campus has submitted the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) 2018-2023 Reauthorization Form to the Institute for Democracy and Higher Education.	Yes	
4. The college calendar incorporates key election dates, including but not limited to, registration deadlines, primary and general election dates, early voting timelines, and absentee ballot deadlines.	No	Include election dates in 2020-21 academic planner; work with Events department to include on online campus calendar; post dates on WolfPack Connect.

5. Our campus designates funds for students or staff to conduct nonpartisan voter registration and education efforts. This can include student government funds, dedicated staff time, or allocated FWS funds.	Yes	The Campus Center funds can support supplies/food/resources needed for voter registration and education efforts.
Part 2 – Student Voter Registration	Yes or No?	Current Efforts & Opportunities to Grow
6. Students are encouraged to register during orientation and provided with online or paper forms.	No	Creating a bookmark with election dates & voter registration information that will be included in all WolfPack Welcome materials starting in January 2020.
7. Voter registration is integrated with class registration and/or the online student portal.	No	
8. Voter registration forms are easily available for students as they get their student IDs.	No	Bookmark with election dates & voter registration information will be readily available at the Student Life offices at the Truax and Goodman South campuses where they can get student IDs.
9. Our campus uses online tools (e.g. Rock the Vote, TurboVote) to register students.	Yes	Our community partners, the City of Madison Clerk and League of Women Voters of Dane County use online tools to register voters on campus.
10. Campus-wide email is used to inform all students how to register to vote at their local address or request an absentee ballot during each semester in which a local, state, or federal election is held.	Yes	Campus-wide email is used to inform students of early voting options at the Truax and Goodman South campuses. Voter registration event information is also shared through campus-wide email.
11. Official campus social media accounts are regularly used to encourage voter registration and to provide nonpartisan election information and resources.	Yes	Campus social media accounts were used to promote National Voter Registration Day events in 2019. We will continue to collaborate with contacts in the Marketing department to promote voter registration and education efforts.
12. At least one experiential or service-learning course exists to foster students’ political learning and culminates in a project that registers, educates, and/or empowers their fellow students to vote.	Unknown	
Part III – Student Education	Yes or No?	Current Efforts & Opportunities to Grow
13. Other courses integrate election engagement in the curriculum and provide structured opportunities to volunteer with campaigns and interest groups of the students’ choosing, or with the school’s nonpartisan engagement team.	Unknown	
14. Our campus hosts and publicizes watch parties for televised debates.	No	

15. Nonpartisan candidate and issue guides are widely distributed and available for students.	No	The Center for Student Life will distribute nonpartisan candidate and issue guides during voter registration & voter education events throughout 2020.
16. Administrators and faculty regularly facilitate campus conversations on issues important to students to promote dialogue and cross-cultural understanding.	Yes	These conversations are often led by student organizations (Senate, United Common Ground) or student clubs (Gender and Sexuality Alliance) or facilitated by the Office of Equity, Inclusion, and Community Engagement.
Part IV – Student Voter Mobilization	Yes or No?	Current Efforts & Opportunities to Grow
17. Our campus works with the local election authority to host an on-campus polling place for early and/or election day voting.	Yes	There will be polling places for City of Madison residents at the Truax and Goodman South campuses.
18. Students have easy access to official documents (e.g. utility bill, letter confirming student status) to satisfy voter ID requirements if students IDs are insufficient.	Yes	Students can obtain a photo ID that meets Wisconsin Voter ID requirements from the Student Life office. Staff from the Center for Student Life will be meeting with the Registrar to evaluate options for easier access to documents verifying student status and address.
19. Our campus makes voting a community activity in multiple ways, such as having the school mascot promote voting, marching/strolling to the polls, and registering student athletes during games.	No	We will facilitate several campus events that celebrate and encourage voting. The College’s mascot, Wolfie, can make an appearance at these events.
20. The President/Chancellor or another senior administrator uses campus-wide emails and social media to encourage students to vote and provide nonpartisan resources (e.g. polling place lookup).	Unknown	

**Two measures that apply only to residential campuses have been removed from this list.*

III. Goals

We have reviewed the NSLVE report with 2016 student voting data, to compare 2020 with the last General Election year, and have set the following quantitative goals related to student voting:

- Increase the registered student voting rate to 75%, from 66.8% in 2016
- Increase the overall student voting rate to 70%, from 56.7% in 2016
- Increase the absentee voting rate to 30%, from 21.9% in 2016
- Increase In-Person Absentee participation from 141 in 2019 to 350 in 2020

Because of the new attention and commitment to voter education, registration, and turnout, we will be using 2020 as a benchmarking year to set future goals. We will track data related to the number of events, students registered, event participation, and partnerships formed with others across the College.

IV. Strategy

Strategy: Build institutional capacity for voter registration & education.

Tactic	Who is responsible for implementation?	Who is the intended audience?	Where & when will it occur?	Outcomes & Indicators
Increase staff capacity by connecting with partner organizations who can support short-term student employees to work on voter registration and voter education programming.	Student Life staff: Ellie, Brianna; Partner organizations (Campus Compact/Campus Election Engagement Project)	Madison College students	Recruit and train up to 2 student workers for Fall 2020 semester. If possible, assign 1 student worker to focus on events at Truax campus and 1 to focus on events at Goodman South campus.	# of programs implemented by student worker # of voters registered at events facilitated by student worker Pre-and post- service leadership development assessments of student workers
Collaborate with Student Life advisors on regional campuses to share tools for voter registration & voter education.	Student Life staff: Ellie, Brianna, and regional advisors	Madison College students	Join in pre-scheduled phone/web meeting with regional advisors in early 2020	# of events held at regional campuses # of students attending regional campus events
Create a digital form to track student attendance and voter registration at events throughout 2020. Distribute to all campuses, and train student staff to use to document their work. Share with any student clubs/organizations who are planning voter registration events.	Student Life staff: Ellie, Brianna	Madison College staff & student leaders	Early 2020	# of events tracked using the digital form
Serve as an in-person absentee polling location for City of Madison residents at both the Truax and Goodman South campuses	Student Life staff: Ellie	Madison College students and staff Also open to any City of Madison residents	February, April, August, and November 2020	# of ballots cast, as reported to us by the City of Madison Clerk's office
Host voter registration events in collaboration with the League of Women Voters in advance of the April and November elections	Student Life staff: Ellie, Brianna	Madison College students and staff	March, September	# of people registered to vote; # of people who participate in other activities at the event
Strategy: Develop informed voters and strengthen opportunities for civic learning beyond the classroom.				

Tactic	Who is responsible for implementation?	Who is the intended audience?	Where & when will it occur?	Outcomes & Indicators
Distribute nonpartisan candidate & issue guides.	Student Life staff: Ellie, Brianna, student staff	Madison College students	Voter registration events: March 2020, National Voter Registration Day in September 2020, October 2020	# of students attending events where information was distributed
Strengthen annual Constitution Day educational programming and connect to voter registration & voter education.	Student Life staff: Brianna, Ellie, with input from advisor team. Potential partnership with political science instructors.	Madison College students	Truax, Goodman South & Regional Campuses: September 17, 2020	# of students participating in events Qualitative data from student evaluations of events
Host Living Room Conversations on multiple campuses. Topics can include voting, political engagement, and civic engagement.	Student Life staff: Ellie, Brianna, student staff, trained facilitation staff	Madison College students & staff	Truax, Goodman South, & Regional Campuses throughout 2020	Qualitative data from student evaluations of events
Integrate voter education into existing Student Life programming, including WolfPack Welcome orientation sessions and tabling at events sponsored by student organizations	Student Life staff: Ellie, Brianna, student staff	Madison College students	Truax, Goodman South, & Regional Campuses throughout 2020	# of fliers distributed in WolfPack Welcome bags; # of voting conversations had during each tabling event
Strategy: Educate students about the voting process.				
Tactic	Who is responsible for implementation?	Who is the intended audience?	Where & when will it occur?	Outcomes & Indicators
Conduct a voting simulation in the form of a Snack Preference Primary and Election. Use this mock election format to educate students about how a partisan presidential preference primary works in Wisconsin, and to generate excitement about voting.	Student Life staff: Ellie, Brianna, student staff	Madison College students & staff	Truax & Goodman South Campuses in March 2020 (before primary) and October 2020 (before general election)	# of student and staff votes cast in election # of voters registered during events

Offer voter registration at each event.				
Distribute resources clarifying types of photo ID that can be used for voting, and the process of what happens when they arrive at the polls. Use resources from the Wisconsin Elections Commission and Campus Election Engagement Project.	Student Life staff: Ellie, Brianna, student staff	Madison College students	Truax & Goodman South Campuses in March 2020 (before primary) and October 2020 (before general election)	# of students attending events where information was distributed
Provide templates so that students can create their voting action plans for where and when they will vote. Provide tablets or laptops where students can look up	Student Life staff: Ellie, Brianna, student staff	Madison College students	All campuses in March 2020 (before primary) and October 2020 (before general election)	# of students who create a personal voting action plan
Increase awareness among students and staff about the In-Person Absentee voting at Madison College campuses through creating promotional materials	Student Life staff: Ellie, Brianna, and student staff	Madison College students and staff	Truax and Goodman South campuses before all 2020 election days	# of people who vote at In-Person Absentee polling locations
Strategy: Develop customized programming and events to reach segments of the student population that had the lowest voting rates in 2016/2018.				
Tactic	Who is responsible for implementation?	Who is the intended audience?	Where & when will it occur?	Outcomes & Indicators
Connect with identity-based student clubs to meet with and share the 2016/2018 NSLVE data. Collaborate with these clubs to generate ideas for voter registration & education.	Student Life staff: Ellie, Brianna, student staff	Student populations who had the lowest voting rates by race/ethnicity in 2018 NSLVE data: Asian students, Black students, and Hispanic students.	Throughout 2020	# of voter registration or education events hosted in collaboration with identity-based clubs/organizations
Connect with program-based clubs and program directors to meet with and share the 2016/2018 NSLVE data. Collaborate with these clubs to generate ideas for voter registration & education.	Student Life staff: Ellie, Brianna, student staff	Student populations by field of study who had the lowest voting rates in 2018 NSLVE data: Mechanic and Repair Technologies/Technicians; Parks, Recreation, Leisure, and Fitness Studies; Construction Trades	Throughout 2020	# of voter registration or education events hosted in collaboration with program clubs/organizations

Host a voter registration event at Commercial Avenue campus to reach students in Construction Trades programs.	Student Life staff: Ellie, Brianna, student staff	Students in Construction Trades programs	Commercial Avenue Campus in fall 2020	# of students attending # of students registered
Strategy: Create spaces for civic learning and engagement for students who are ineligible to vote (international students, students under 18, students who are not citizens, students with felony convictions who have not yet completed their terms of sentence).				
Tactic	Who is responsible for implementation?	Who is the intended audience?	Where & when will it occur?	Outcomes & Indicators
Share specific event information with departments who can connect with students who are ineligible to vote (Center for International Education, STEM Academy). Customize event invitations to highlight ways that students can participate even if they are ineligible to vote.	Student Life staff: Ellie, Brianna, student staff	Students ineligible to vote	Throughout 2020	# of opportunities offered at events
Any each voter registration or voter education event, offer an intentional action step that is open to students not eligible to vote. Examples include: encouraging friends and family to vote, participating in civic conversations, voting in Student Senate elections, engaging with student groups or organizations on campus who also encourage civic learning.	Student Life staff: Ellie, Brianna, student staff	Students ineligible to vote	Throughout 2020	# of opportunities offered at events

V. Reporting

At a minimum, this report will be shared internally with staff in Student Life and the Vice President for Student Affairs. These stakeholders may have feedback for us on the plan, and will be considered active supporters as we take action on this plan.

Some components of this plan will be shared with the staff in the Media Relations staff at Madison College so that they can help us promote In-Person Absentee Voting with local media. We plan to leverage our winning the Best In Class award from the ALL IN Challenge leading up to elections in the spring so that there is a more substantial story bringing together winning that award, In-Person Absentee Voting, and excitement about the Wisconsin presidential primary in

April. We may also work with Media Relations in the Fall to share what we are doing at the college leading up to the presidential election in November, when there is sure to be significant media attention to voting.

We also plan to share parts of the plan with the internal communications staff at Madison College in order to increase awareness among staff about our voter education and registration events. Staff can be strong advocates for the work that we are doing, and promote our programs with students who we may not otherwise reach. We will make the plan available to read in full by sharing the Madison College page on the ALL IN Challenge website.

Finally, having this action plan written opens the door for other opportunities that may come along. We may be able to use this plan to gain additional partners for the work we are doing and/or gain valuable resources related to voter education, registration, and turnout efforts.

VI. Evaluation

Evaluation of our efforts will be critical to improving our future programming and initiatives because we are creating a baseline for participation and effectiveness. For this first year of significant voter education, registration, and turnout efforts, we will focus on collecting participation data related to each of our strategies introduced above. We will also debrief each event and initiative to document changes we would make for future success.

The primary purpose for collecting data in 2020 will be to set a benchmark upon which to create future goals and to determine which interventions seem to move the needle toward achieving our voter registration and turnout goals. By collecting participation data, we will also contribute data to the overall Student Life participation goals reported to the Vice President for Student Affairs. We hope that the voting events might draw in a different population of students than we might see at other events sponsored by Student Life and student organizations because it will offer a different type of program than is otherwise offered on campus.

We will also continue to participate in the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement, which will help us to compare overall student registration and voting numbers to previous years, and give us insight on some of the specific student population voting rates compared to past elections. By looking at these data, we will be able to determine whether we met our goals, and help us to set goals for future years.

At a minimum, we will share the results of our evaluation with the Student Life staff and Vice President for Student Affairs, but we may also share and utilize it in different ways. It may help us to create partnerships both on and off campus and expand our resources and capacity for future efforts. Given that this is a new initiative for Student Life, we are not yet sure what opportunities there may be to share and utilize the data.

As our efforts become more established heading into the midterm elections in 2022 and presidential elections in 2024, we hope to have the capacity to carry out a more robust evaluation of voter education, registration, and turnout activities.