

MARYLAND
INSTITUTE
COLLEGE
OF ART

M | I | C / A

ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge

ACTION PLAN

JANUARY 2022

I. Executive Summary

BACKGROUND

Maryland Institute College of Art (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 with the tools necessary to create and lead social change.

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.

VOTER ACCESS INITIATIVE (VAI)

In 2016, a group of students formed a student interest group, the Political Engagement Club (now called MICA Organizers and Activists), 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. Since 2015, this initiative has evolved into a robust, cross-campus effort, and is one piece of MICA's longer-term strategic plan to integrate civic learning and action, as well as democratic engagement, throughout the institution.

2020 ACTION PLAN

This plan, developed by the Voter Access Initiative at the Maryland Institute College of Art, reviews the numerous assets in civic learning and democratic engagement that exist at MICA. It also builds on the successes from FY20&21 and identifies areas for improvement. VAI's goals focus on establishing a one-MICA approach to civic learning; including all students in the initiative's efforts (specifically international and non-voting students); strengthening voter registration, education, and turnout efforts to ensure 100% of eligible students vote; continuing to build inclusive civic learning and action opportunities; and, lastly, expanding efforts to reach local, regional, national, and international presence.

This plan serves as an organizing document to build and mobilize campus efforts to create a culture of engagement. To implement the plan, VAI meets monthly to coordinate efforts. Between meetings, work group members take lead roles to execute the various strategies.

This plan is effective from January 1, 2022 through December 31, 2024. And will continue to be updated as needed to meet the needs and priorities of the VAI work group and MICA students.

II. Leadership

This work is led by a cross campus collaborative workgroup that meets monthly to identify, connect, and develop programming to increase civic learning and democratic engagement on campus. In addition to prioritizing voter access efforts, the committee continues to expand strategies to ensure an intentional, coordinated effort to embed civic engagement and activism into the DNA of MICA.

Committee members represent a variety of offices across campus, including Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, Undergraduate Studies, Strategic Communications, the Center for International Education, Strategic Initiatives, and MICA Organizers and Activists (a student organization). As the work evolves, committee members continue to invite additional representatives to the table.

While this initiative is a cross-campus collaboration, the Center for Creative Citizenship (CCC) is coordinating and overseeing this work. CCC is responsible for convening the group about once a month, scheduling one-on-one and follow up meetings as needed, and documenting the work (both during and between meetings). CCC has five team members; in the event that one leaves, leadership will be continued by the other staff with support from other members of the VAI workgroup.



WORK GROUP MEMBERS

Nikita Akula ('25), VAI Community Site Leader

Center for Student Engagement

Robert Alicea, Director

Residence Life & Student Conduct

Erin Baynham, Social Media Manager

Strategic Communications

Cole Bryant ('22), Director of Transitions

MICA Student Voice Associations

Emily Chappell, Public Relations Manager

Strategic Communications

Jenny De La Cruz ('22), Student Leader

Student Voting Focus Group & Former VAI Community Site Leader

Allison Fisher, Manager

Globe Press and Collection at MICA

Kevin Griffin Moreno, Director of Strategic Projects

Office of Strategic Initiatives

Elli Hernandez, Coordinator of Community Arts

Center for Student Engagement

Karol Martinez-Doane, Director

Center for Student Engagement

Kate McGrain ('18), Coordinator

MICA Voter Access Initiative

Abby Neyenhouse, Director

Center for Creative Citizenship

Mike Patterson, Vice President & Dean of Students

Student Affairs

Cassidy Percevecz ('24), Student Leader

Student Voting Focus Group Member, RA

Emma Roshan ('22), VAI Community Site Leader

Center for Student Engagement

Lauren Schooley ('23), Student Leader

Student Voting Focus Group Member

Hannah Shaw ('18), Coordinator

MICA Voter Access Initiative

Mina Snider ('25), VAI Community Site Leader

Center for Student Engagement

Maya Sorhage ('23), Student Leader

Student Voting Focus Group Member

Celeste Tooth ('24), Student Leader

Student Voting Focus Group & Former VAI Community Site Leader

Colette Veasey-Cullors, Interim Vice Provost

Undergraduate Studies

Keri Watley, Health Promotion Educator,

MICA Wellness

Michael Weiss, Associate Dean

Fine Arts and First Year Experience

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

CROSS-CAMPUS COLLABORATION

Academic Affairs*
Center for Creative Citizenship*
Office of Culture & Identity
Center for Social Design*
Center for Student Engagement*
Community Art Collaborative
Decker Library*
Digital Fabrication Studio
Events
Facilities
First Year Experience*
MICA Wellness*
Globe Collection & Press*
Graduate Studies
Graphic Design
Humanistic Studies
International Student Services*
MICA Organizers & Activists*
Painting
Postal and Print Services
Residence Life & Off Campus Housing*
Staff Empowerment Council
Strategic Communications*
Strategic Initiatives*
Student Affairs*
Student Voice Association*
Transportation & Operations Services

LOCAL

Baltimore Collegetown
Baltimore Design School
Baltimore Votes
Campus Compact Mid-Atlantic
Enoch Pratt Library
Greater Baltimore Cultural Alliance
League of Women Voters
Out for Justice

NATIONAL

100% Democracy; a project of JHU Agora
ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge
Ask Every Student (Co-designer Campus)
Campus Compact
Civic Holidays
Election Hero Day
For Freedoms
Imagining America
National Voter Education Week
National Voter Registration Day
Show of Hands
Students Learn Students Vote†
TurboVote
Vote Early Day
Vote Together

* Voter Access Initiative member

III. Commitment

MICA's mission, strategic plan, and educational programming demonstrate the college's commitment to integrating civic learning and democratic engagement throughout the institution.

For many artists, being engaged means acting as agents of social change. This desire is expressed through MICA's staff, faculty, and active student participation in the many pan-institutional initiatives shaped around community engagement, social design, and sustainability. MICA takes pride in the college's long-standing commitment as an engaged and creative partner with many communities, organizations, and publics of the City of Baltimore.

MICA's mission, vision, tenets and institutional learning outcomes (ILOs) reflect and advance the role of MICA students in creating a more just and equitable world and reflect MICA's commitment to civic learning and democratic engagement:

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.

Tenets

- We assert the centrality of artists, designers, and educators in society.
- We shape culture.
- We flourish through collaboration.
- We embrace differences and champion equity.
- We invent through thoughtful disruption.
- We model a community of care.

ILOs

MICA students will understand the interconnectedness of local and global issues and be able to ethically engage a variety of cultural contexts.

MICA students will articulate how their values inform their creative practice.

MICA students will demonstrate an understanding of the importance of creative practices and their impact on community, society, and the world.

Core Values

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.

Currently, the MICA community is developing its next strategic plan – a roadmap building towards MICA's bicentennial in 2026 and into the future. The strategic plan is the next step in translating the Mission and Vision into concrete action steps for realizing the collective goals of the campus community. MICA's Voter Access Initiative is explicitly cited in the strategic plan, demonstrating MICA's commitment to institutionalizing civic learning and democratic engagement.

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.

CURRICULAR

The First Year Forum class 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 the following disciplines: Sculpture, Fiber, Painting, Illustration, Graphic Design, Product Design, Gaming, Art History, Ceramics, Architectural Design, Sustainability and Social Practice and Ecosystems, Sustainability, & Justice (ESJ).

In addition, 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 increase 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 hosts 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.

CO-CURRICULAR

MICA's Center for Creative Citizenship 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 the Center for Student Engagement 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. 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 the world today. Established in 2005, Constitution Day has evolved into a two-day symposium that is open to the public and includes panels and commentary on contemporary issues in politics, government, civic engagement and activism.

Historically, MICA students have organized and led voter registration campaigns including Rock the Vote, "Don't You Want To," and most recently, joining National Voter Registration Day and the Civic Holidays calendar. In 2019, students self-organized to join the Global Climate Strike, hosting an event on MICA's central quad on campus.

MICA's Student Voice Association (SVA) advocates for the interests and needs of the student community at MICA. SVA serves as a connection between students, administrators, faculty, and staff, promoting a culture of transparency, inclusion, and collaboration. In 2021, students voted to approve SVA's first-ever constitution.

MICA students, staff, and faculty are collaborating to establish shared governance, a system of checks and balances for informed strategies and actions. Through shared governance, MICA will establish alignment of mission-driven priorities and outcomes, as well as shared responsibility and accountability, based on a culture of transparency and collaboration

As a member of Campus Compact, MICA has the opportunity to nominate a student leader annually to join their Civic Fellows cohort. Through the fellowship, Campus Compact states, "students from across the region develop their leadership skills and understanding of civic and community engagement so that they may better serve as leaders in their communities and collectively create solutions to our region's most urgent problems."

In addition, MICA's Community Art and Service program coordinates community-based learning and engagement opportunities for the MICA Community inclusive of students, staff, faculty & alumni.

- France-Merrick Fellows (FMFs) and Community Site Leaders (CSLs) are stipended volunteer positions in which students propose and lead projects with community partners. FMFs and CSLs demonstrate MICA's institutional commitment to supporting students' civic engagement through volunteerism.
- Since fall 2020, the Voter Access Initiative has been fortunate to engage several of the student leaders in the work. Students have created, designed, and implemented new initiatives, videos, graphics, newsletters, and more.
- Occurring annually, and guided by MICA's institutional commitment to Thrive with Baltimore, the Day of Service engages around 100 MICA stakeholders volunteering their time and efforts to advance the mission of several grassroots organizations across Baltimore.

Additional co-curricular programming includes: MICA Day of Action, Mixed Media Speaker Series, First Year Fellows in Creative Entrepreneurship

In AY22, MICA further demonstrated its growing commitment to developing an engaged citizenry:

- **The Florence Gaskins Harper Endowed Chair in Art Education:** Pam Lawton, was appointed in 2020, with scholarly expertise in community-engaged art-based practice. In her role as thought leader for the Hurwitz Center, she is developing an in-house online journal called Bmorphosis: Transforming with Baltimore, intended to "highlight the artist output, research, teaching, and thinking of MICA and Baltimore creatives working to transform with Baltimore."
- **Photography + Media & Society (PM&S):** launched with a new mission integrating a place-based ethic for research and making. There is an interest in learning how to connect with, and nurture, Baltimore-based partners especially for thesis projects.
- **MICA Quilt Group:** created by students to support and collaborate with MICA's Raffle Quilt Project. The Raffle Quilt project originated in the MICA Fiber Department in 2015 as a gathering of students, faculty and staff working together weekly to construct a quilt to raffle. Since 2016, the group has collaborated with the African American Quilters of Baltimore to produce quilts that are then raffled during MICA's annual Art Market. All proceeds from the raffles support an organization or organizations selected by the group members.

IV. Landscape

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

CLIMATE

MICA's president, along with faculty, staff, and students, value the importance of voting and civic engagement. With a growing campus culture celebrating civic engagement, along with comprehensive resources from local and national partners, VAI has expanded its breadth and depth of programming to continue to build momentum and energy around civic and democratic engagement.

Through the institutions' commitment, a dedicated work group, and passionate student body, MICA & VAI are growing a positive, energized campus culture celebrating student voice and a creative global citizenry. As the work continues, VAI's goal is to ensure resources and information are easily accessible and widely available across campus, both digitally and physically.

In addition, as the pandemic has stretched campus capacity, VAI was more intentional about working with existing efforts across campus. VAI continues to ask about and adapt to the best communication channels for students, faculty, and staff. VAI leverages individual and departmental assets to ensure the work is shared across campus, not just in CCC. Additionally, VAI hopes to have voter information (tabling, flyers, etc.) available at as many campus events and student touchpoints as possible - to have voting and civic engagement seamlessly integrated into campus culture.

STUDENTS

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. The following student interest groups demonstrate student appetite for civic engagement:

- Student Voice Association + student governance
- MICA Organizers and Activists
- Students of Sustainability
- Diversity Coordinators
- Community Site Leaders and France Merrick Fellows

Student Leadership

In 2020 and for the first time, VAI had paid student positions to help coordinate and implement the work - emphasizing the value of having students' input. Leading from their own and their peers' experiences, the students developed student-centered programming and resources. Since 2020, VAI is committed to having paid student positions to support MICA's voter and civic engagement work. Through semester-long commitments, short term focus groups, or one-on-one projects, integrating student voice into this work has been pivotal to the growth and impact of VAI.

Understanding Demographics of MICA's Student Body

Each semester, the VAI team works with the student records office to collect the most up to date students-by-state data. Because election deadlines and information vary by state, VAI identifies the top 10-12 states represented on campus each election year, and develops tailored emails and communications related to those states and their voter deadlines. Additionally, VAI encourages all students to sign up with TurboVote to ensure they receive the most accurate and personalized reminders for their voting location.

Below is the Student-by-State breakdown for Spring 2022. This will be updated at the start of Fall 2022.

STATE	UGRD	GRAD	MPS	TOTAL
MD	105	50	448	603
NY	7	28	71	106
CA	13	30	55	98
NJ	3	14	80	97
PA	12	13	65	90
VA	10	18	48	76
FL	3	7	63	73
TX	4	17	48	69
NC	2	5	40	47
IL	2	6	24	32
MA	2	5	24	31
DC	9	10	11	30

In Maryland, college students are eligible to change their voter registration to Maryland while they are living here. Many students who are interested in voting locally are unaware of this. VAI makes sure to communicate this Maryland student eligibility, so they understand they have the option to decide where they would like to vote. With this information,

and the awareness that 36% of MICA students are Maryland residents, VAI will be developing more simplified information related to Baltimore City and Maryland elections to ensure voters are informed about the candidates and ballot questions.

Including all students

Leaders of the VAI are mindful that each year, between 18-25% of the student population are not eligible to vote in U.S. elections. Furthermore, VAI recognizes that voting is not the only way to measure civic engagement on campus. Accordingly, VAI's action plan ensures an integrated and sustainable approach to embed civic action throughout the institution. For example, students created a series of videos for their peers including, "[How to Get Civically Engaged](#)," and "[Civic Engagement for International Students at MICA](#)" which discuss ways anyone - and everyone - can get involved!

These videos are posted on MICA's vote webpage and shared with all MICA students through various communication channels (Canvas - MICA's LMS, the MICA campus app, First Year Forum seminars, and other student gatherings). In addition, in 2020, students have created events like the Disenfranchised Voter Project - which engaged international MICA members and nonvoters in sharing issues that are important to them - and an "I Voted" sticker design contest open to all MICA stakeholders. VAI will continue to work with international students to build on this foundation of programming that further encourages civic engagement among all students.

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT DATA

In 2018, MICA's first year participating in the ALL IN challenge, and the college's first with a cross-campus collaborative effort, MICA voter participation increased from the 2014 midterm elections. This change joined the national trend—nationally, voter turnout reached 39.1%, a 21 point increase from 2014 and the highest turnout for a midterm since 1914 (United States Elections Project).

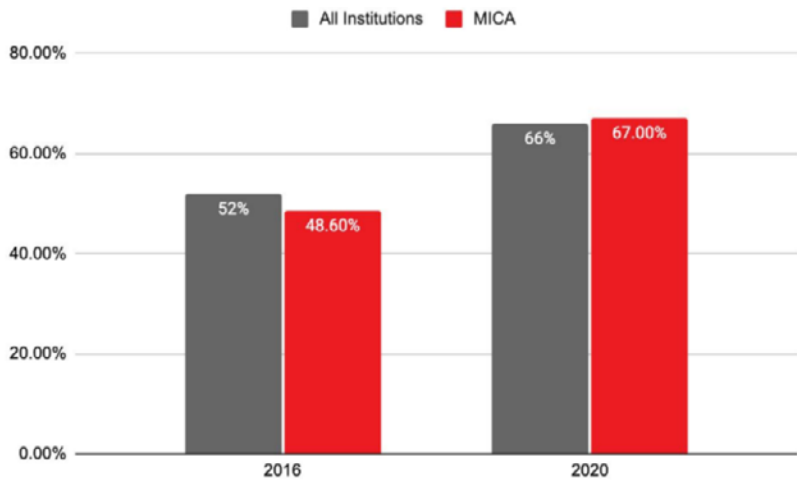
Since 2018, student voter registration and turnout has steadily increased when compared to past elections of the same kind (midterm vs presidential). The graphic on page 13 details MICA's 2020 presidential election data.

While the voting rate of eligible first year students jumped 30 points, there is a notable gap between voter registration and voter turnout, particularly among the juniors, seniors, and graduate students in 2020. Given the success of VAI's intentional first-year student outreach, VAI will continue this strategy with first year students and sophomores in fall 2022 (with the expectation that the juniors (who were first year students in 2020 will continue to turn out to vote). In addition, VAI will expand the voter engagement strategy to include more intentional outreach to the graduate student population.

NOTE: In fall 2021, MICA learned that the college's NSLVE data was inaccurate due to differing enrollment reporting practices. With NSLVE's support, MICA's information has been updated to reflect the true data of student voter registration and turnout.

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT DATA CONT

Voting Rate (Voter Turnout)



+18.4

Point increase in voter turnout from 2016

- **1 point higher** than the national average

From 2016 to 2020:

- **31 point increase** in early and not in-person voting
- **30 point increase** in first year student voting rate

Registration Rate

79.3%

- Increase of 7 points from 2016 to 2020
- 3.7 points lower than the national average

Voting Rate of Registered Students

84.5%

- Increase of 17.3 points from 2016 to 2020
- 4.5 points higher than the national average

Sources:
Institute for Democracy & Higher Education: National Study of Learning, Voting and Engagement. (2021). 2016 and 2020 report for MICA. Medford, MA.

Breakdown of Voting Rate

69%

undergraduate
voting rate

64%

graduate
voting rate

Voting rate by class year

- 75% = first year
- 74% = sophomores
- 63% = juniors & seniors

INSTITUTIONAL INITIATIVES

The MICUA Student and Military Voter Empowerment Act was passed on February 23, 2021 with bipartisan support. In 2020, national voter turnout under the age of 29 was between 52-55% and military participation was 46%, compared to 66.7% among all eligible voters. There are many barriers that get in the way of registering to vote, the Student and Military Voter Empowerment Act (VEA) aims to make voting more accessible for these two groups of Marylanders. The act requires that Maryland colleges and universities add a voter registration link to the home page of the online portal students use to register for course work and to submit an annual report on the number of clicks in a calendar year that voter registration link receives. VAI is excited to work with MICA's Strategic Communications team to add the voter registration link to the course registrar website as one step in institutionalizing voter engagement at MICA.

Expanded employee voting policy

VAI worked with MICA's People, Belonging, & Culture to expand MICA's Voting Policy for all employees. In an effort to provide more flexibility and access to vote, the policy has been updated as follows and is included in the Employee Handbook:

VAI worked to expand MICA's Employee Voting Policy to allow for more flexibility and to take into account the changes in voting due to the pandemic.

The updated policy expanded the use of paid time off (PTO) for voting early in-person and voting by mail or absentee ballot. The policy also increased the amount of PTO from two to three hours with flexibility to take additional time off if needed. This updated policy recognizes that the time it takes to vote has always been unpredictable and this year would be even more uncertain. With this updated policy, MICA was added to Electionday.org's list of organizations with vote-friendly policies.

- MICA encourages eligible employees to exercise your constitutional right to vote in all federal, state, and local elections. You may take up to three hours* paid time off to vote including voting on Election Day, voting early in-person, and voting by mail or absentee ballot. If you are going to take time off to vote, notify your supervisor ahead of time. This policy applies to all employees (full-time and part-time) except students employed in positions that require student status as a condition of employment.
- *With the approval of your supervisor, more time may be taken off if needed. MICA recognizes the time it takes to vote has always been unpredictable, and this year will be even more uncertain due to social distancing requirements at polling places, changes to polling locations, and unfamiliarity with dropbox locations.

ADDITIONAL ASSETS

MICA ASSETS + INITIATIVES

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.

Show of Hands: Show of Hands is a transformational new art and democracy platform supporting local elections officials, non-partisan organizations, and other community partners who are looking to get their message out in beautiful and timeless ways. Housed at the historic Globe Collection and Press at MICA (Maryland Institute College of Art) the Show of Hands team created over 30 pieces of “voting art” in 2020. This art reached hundreds of thousands of voters in partnerships with local election officials and other non-partisan organizations dedicated to including everyone in democracy!



LOCAL INITIATIVES

Baltimore Collegetown Network: “The Baltimore Collegetown Network brings 13 colleges and universities together to attract, engage, and retain students and raise the profile of Baltimore as a great college town. Projects and partnerships attract, engage, and retain students, raise the profile of Baltimore as a college destination, and help colleges share resources. Primary programs include: Academic partnerships, Transportation, Marketing, Internships, Communities of Practice, Research Studies, Engagement Programs, and Collegetown Fellowship.

Baltimore Votes: ““Baltimore Votes is working toward a future for our city where every person, in every precinct, votes in every election.”

NATIONAL INITIATIVES

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.”

Ask Every Student: “A project of the National Resource Consortium on Full Student Voter Participation, seeks to create research-backed processes, systems, and tools to answer that question. We’ve found that the key to reaching full student voter participation comes down to accessing a few minutes of individualized focus from every student on campus to prepare them to confidently navigate the democratic process.”

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.

NATIONAL INITIATIVES CONT.

Creative Placemaking: In December 2019, MICA was awarded a grant from ArtPlace America to build the creative placemaking field through the development of an academic credential, scholarly research, and participation in a national network of higher ed institutions involved in this work. While there are many definitions of “creative placemaking,” in this context it refers to arts-based approaches to equitable community development and economic development in economically marginalized neighborhoods.

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 with a research database that includes nearly half of all college students in the United States.”

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.”

V. Goals

VISION

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

LONG-TERM GOALS

2026 Strategic Plan

Become a local and national model and resource for civic engagement in higher education.

- ☐ Known resource in Baltimore for nonpartisan voting access
- ☐ A collaborator in supporting a culture of civic engagement locally to realize 'Thrive with Baltimore'

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

- ☐ Required course of choice on civic engagement
 - ☐ Grants and resources for alumni
-

MID-TERM GOALS

2024 presidential election

Realize full student voter participation (2024 Presidential Election)

- ☐ Voting Rate (Voter Turnout): 100% voting rate of eligible students
- ☐ Registration Rate: 100% student voter registration of eligible students
- ☐ Voting Rate of Registered Students: 100%

Expand efforts to reach local, regional, national and international presence

Share MICA's robust voter education resources locally and nationally

Integrate civic learning for ALL students

- ☐ Develop and utilize metrics to assess civic engagement (awareness, opportunities, and participation) beyond voter participation
- ☐ Annual or pre-recorded Training modules for faculty and staff on facilitating civic engagement
 - ☐ Add to professional development days

MID-TERM GOALS CONT.

- ☐ Require student organizations to do a civic engagement training or activity
 - ☐ Establish Institution-wide understanding of MICA + civic engagement
 - ☐ Highlight global political systems and government relevant to student body
 - ☐ Form a teaching circle for faculty who incorporate civic engagement in their classes
-

SHORT-TERM GOALS

20202 midterm elections

Increase Voter Registration/Turnout Efforts

- ☐ Voting Rate (Voter Turnout): 70% voting rate of eligible students (increase from 67% in 2020 and 38% in 2018)
- ☐ Registration Rate: 100% student voter registration of eligible students (increase from 79% in 2020 and 72% in 2018)
- ☐ Voting Rate of Registered Students: 90% (increase from 84% in 2020 and 52% in 2018)

Expand efforts to reach local, regional, national, and international presence

- ☐ Work with Baltimore Public Schools to broaden voting outreach
- ☐ Develop series of public events around civic life on campus

Strengthen voter education

- ☐ Provide voter team stipends for student leaders
- ☐ Create nonpartisan awareness about candidates and issues (i.e. installations, online resources, printouts, etc)
- ☐ Increase touch points for voter information
 - ☐ Table tents and flyers around campus
 - ☐ E-newsletter

SHORT-TERM GOALS CONT.

- ☐ Make voter information easily accessible to students (i.e. inside mica webpage)
- ☐ Start building a graphics template for voter ed for primary and general elections (ie. candidate guides, ballot measure information, how to vote/important election information)
- ☐ MICA maintains a culture of voter education/celebration/support

Include ALL students

- ☐ Survey “political engagement” in MICA’s international student body
- ☐ Create additional opportunities and touch points to address current global events, beyond voting
- ☐ Include civic engagement module in student orientations - or “collaborate with CSE and Student Affairs to highlight/promote/ create modules”

Implement a one-MICA approach to civic learning

- ☐ Incorporate civic engagement modules into First Year Experience (either through foundation course, program, and/or orientation)
- ☐ Map and facilitate connections among civic engagement-oriented groups and efforts on campus
- ☐ Host a faculty workshop during August 2022 faculty orientation and professional development week
- ☐ More fully align Constitution Day/Day of Action events with VAI work
- ☐ Center for Student Engagement establishes a required professional development workshop for France Merrick Fellows and Community Site Leaders
- ☐ Host a student summit - part professional development workshops and part activism (students co-plan)

NEAR-TERM ACTIONS

Spring 2022

Expand efforts to reach local, regional, national, and international presence

- ☐ Publish book chapter

Evolve the voter access initiative

- ☐ Update/clarify work group roles, responsibilities and expectations
- ☐ Scope of VAI group's mandate
- ☐ Identify structure and goals of this work group
- ☐ Invite new members to join

Strengthen Voter Registration/Education/Turnout Efforts

- ☐ Integrate TurboVote into existing student-faced programming (orientation, course-selection, Canvas interface)
- ☐ Link in course registration
- ☐ Incorporate key election dates into AY22 & AY23 college calendars
- ☐ Create voter registration trainings for students
- ☐ Research student touch points for information sharing at MICA
- ☐ Identify upcoming events and classes for announcements and/or tabling
 - ☐ SVA town halls
 - ☐ RA meetings

Include ALL students

- ☐ Intentionally engage international students in programming
- ☐ Lead with and emphasize civic engagement in its various forms; make it clear that voting is one civic engagement tool among many
- ☐ Focus on education and census completion with the campus body
- ☐ Create materials/resources to share with Baltimore community

NEAR-TERM ACTIONS CONT.

Establish a one-MICA approach to civic learning

- ☐ Create a definition of civic engagement for MICA
- ☐ Get pan-college civic engagement into MICA's 2026 Strategic Plan
- ☐ Create a clear mission for the Center for Creative Citizenship and the center's role in leading this initiative
- ☐ Create additional spaces for students and employees to process current events
- ☐ Begin planning to align Constitution Day/Day of Action events with VAI work
 - ☐ Discuss/Plan student civic engagement summit

VI. Strategy

DESIGN PRINCIPLES

VAI developed a set of design principles to ensure VAI and its many parts reflect the needs, wants, and interests of the MICA community. VAI will refer to these principles as the group builds, implements, and evaluates the campus 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 the MICA community to give feedback on Voter Access Initiative and other opportunities; update programming to reflect that input.

STUDENT-CENTERED. Engage students as leaders and designers of voting resources and strategies.

SHORT-TERM TACTICS

VOTER REGISTRATION

TurboVote: MICA is an official partner of TurboVote, an online platform that makes registering to vote quick and easy. The site guides people through the processes required for registration and voting by mail, and sends reminders about deadlines and voting.

We include MICA's TurboVote link in targeted social media and campus-wide email marketing campaigns. The link is on MICA's VAI website and as of April 2022, has been added to the course registration page.

Tabling: VAI tables at various events on campus including student orientations, Constitution Day, and National Voter Registration Day. VAI identifies central areas on campus that reach both graduate and undergraduate students. Tabling includes: helping people register to vote, answering questions about voting, guiding students through TurboVote, and engaging the MICA community in completing pledge cards (everyone—regardless of voting status—is invited to complete a pledge card).

2022 Goal: Add voter registration table next to student-involvement fair registration table

Class Presentations / Raps: VAI provides a 5-10 minute overview of how to register to vote, guidance on key resources for registering to vote and creating a voting plan, and shares opportunities for civic engagement beyond the election, including ways for nonvoters to get involved.

Faculty Involvement: At the first full-faculty meeting in the fall, VAI shares information with faculty members to encourage their students to register to vote in the first weeks of classes. Webpage was created with resources for faculty about how to add voter registration and engagement into their class and materials.

Civic Holidays: MICA is a partner for all four civic holidays: National Voter Registration Day, National Voter Education Week, Vote Early Day and Election Hero day. While each holiday has a different focus, they all help us work towards voter registration, voter education and voter turnout goals.

VOTER REGISTRATION CONT

- **National Voter Registration Day** is a national effort to bring energy, excitement, and awareness to the voter registration process. VAI holds NVRD celebrations in three locations on campus to reach both undergraduate and graduate students. At the event, students have the opportunity to sign up with TurboVote, register to vote, and get answers to their questions about voting and the upcoming elections. Students enjoy democracy-themed decorations, a photo booth, button-making, and snacks.
- **National Voter Education Week:** Each day of National Voter Education Week we will send a campus-wide email and post on to MICA's campus app about the corresponding day's actions. Students created a series of videos that we will ask faculty to share in class this week, including information about creating your voting plan and how to get civically engaged as an international student. We also have student-created slide decks that will be shared with faculty to share in class or they can sign up for a student to present to their class. Additionally, we will be a designer partner and help create graphics for National Voter Education Week.
- **Vote Early Day:** We will send a campus-wide email with information about voting early in the week leading up to the event and run a social media campaign leading up to and on the day of the event with student social media takeovers discussing the importance of voting early.
- **Election Hero Day:** VAI's goal is to highlight MICA students, staff and faculty members that have worked as poll workers and volunteers.

Support Baltimore High Schools: MICA supports voter registration events at Baltimore Design School (BDS) to increase voting access for Baltimore high school students. This goal is to broaden outreach to other Baltimore high schools after piloting this program with BDS. A slide deck was created aimed at high school students to talk about voter registration and the importance of the youth vote. The goal is to share this deck with other Baltimore City High Schools.

VOTER REGISTRATION CONT

Student-made Videos: Student leaders created videos about how to register to vote, how to get civically engaged, and more! These are all posted on our website, shared with students via email, and promoted to faculty to share in their classes.

Message Banking: An effort to reach out to all students that are eligible to vote via email or through the MICA app to assist them with voter registration and creating a voting plan.

Course Registration: A voter registration link is in the course registration portal. Working with Academic Advising for advisors to add a line re: voter registration in the course reg emails or in advising meetings.

VOTER EDUCATION

See also: [Tabling](#), [Class Raps](#) and [National Voter Registration Day](#)

Flyers and Posters Distribution: A critical tactic of VAI is the collaboration with Globe Collection and Press at MICA. Founded in 1929, Globe was one of the nation's largest showcard printing companies, known for its bright colors and bold wooden type. Through a variety of printed materials, VAI and Globe created a unified brand with vibrant messages celebrating democracy. Below are several Globe projects worth highlighting:

- MICA Votes flyers contain important voting information geared towards students. It answered students' most frequently asked questions, such as, "Should I vote in Baltimore or my hometown?" It also includes ways to get involved in the elections beyond voting. Flyers are updated and distributed during pertinent times throughout the year, including student orientations and school events.
- Globe poster designs to call people to action and get out the vote. Over 1,200 posters were distributed and displayed around the city in AY19.
- Due to high demand and requests coming in from across the nation, Globe released digital versions of the posters under a Creative Commons license. Posters are free to download at mica.edu/vote, broadening the reach of the vibrant messages.

VOTER EDUCATION CONT.

- International poster designs seek to include international members of the MICA community and foster cross-cultural conversations
- Globe is organizing “Show of Hands.” Show of Hands is a transformational new art and democracy platform for local elections officials, non-partisan organizations, and other community partners who are looking to get their message out in beautiful and timeless ways. The Show of Hands team created over 30 pieces of “voting art” in 2020. This art reached hundreds of thousands of voters in partnerships with local election officials and other non-partisan organizations dedicated to including everyone in democracy!
- Table tents and physical flyer for bathrooms, like Stall Street Journal

Mailings: Small flyers for student mailboxes; sticker or magnet with the small note (has to be small enough to fit into mailbox).

Speaking at Events: VAI members attend events and existing meetings to discuss the importance of civic engagement and share upcoming opportunities for students to use their voice locally and nationally. Up to 5 minute plugs during other events; can include a slide with key contact info. Work with RAs and student orgs to include information in their meetings and on bulletin boards.

Constitution Day: Established in 2005, Constitution Day continues the College’s tradition of leadership in raising and exploring important political issues. VAI includes a slide during the event with voter registration resources and hosts a voter registration table at the event.

MICA Votes Website: The VAI website provides up-to-date information about upcoming elections. The site includes resources such as a state-by-state election guide, information about campaign issues, how to check your voter registration, and more.

Civic 101 Graphic Series and social media posts: VAI will continue to create content about general voter and civic education topics. In 2021, VAI created graphics about the history of Constitution Day and how it has been celebrated at MICA and a fresher on the U.S. Constitution. The goal for future series would be to create content on student-identified voter and civic education topics.

VOTER EDUCATION CONT.

The Civic Chronicle Newsletter: About each month, VAI student leaders create a newsletter to educate and entertain students, faculty, and staff. Newsletter content includes elections around the world, interesting facts re: voting and civic engagement (both locally and nationally), and links for voter registration and resources.

Digital Assets: Digital assets such as Zoom backgrounds, graphics on the MICA APP, Canvas banners and email signatures contain voter information.

Campus-wide Emails: Emails to all MICA students, staff and faculty members to plug key dates and voter resources before elections, to mark the civic holidays, and at other critical times throughout the year.

VOTER TURNOUT

See also: Flyers and Posters Distribution and Campus-wide Email

Absentee Ballot Party: Since MICA has a large population that votes out-of-state, MOA piloted a absentee ballot party to assist peers in completing absentee ballot applications. In 2022, VAI will build on this pilot to support students through the absentee ballot process.

Early Voting Shuttles (*this has been suspended during COVID-19 and will be re-evaluated based on campus policies for the next election cycle*): VAI organizes MICA shuttles to take students from campus to the nearest early voting location at the University of Maryland Baltimore.

Social Media: We post important information regarding the elections and deadlines on MICA and VAI social media channels. We also share updates about civic engagement events on campus.

Party at the Polls (*this has been suspended during COVID-19 and will be re-evaluated based on campus policies for the next election cycle*): MICA partners with #VoteTogether and Baltimore Votes to host Party at the Polls to celebrate democratic participation. VAI and MOA organize several walks or “parades” to the polls on election day to our nearest polling location. Pizza and other activities are provided on campus as students meet to walk to the polls together.

Virtual offices hours: VAI hosts virtual office hours where students can join us on Zoom for support with any voting questions. As the campus reopens, this could be expanded to include in-person sessions or tabling at lunch time.

LONG-TERM STRATEGIES

STUDENT ACTIVISM

Encourage and promote student activism.

- Support identity- and activism-based student organizations and invite them to VAI workgroup meetings - expand this to more student groups
 - Provide trainings and resources to students:
 - Knowing the system and knowing how to advocate
 - Connect and participate in local issues and protests
 - Develop civic engagement fund to offer resources for students wanting to do this work
 - Encourage transparency with information at all levels of the institution; offer power mapping workshop to more students
 - Develop and promote opportunities for cross-student leadership relationship building and collaboration
 - Support SVA elections, programming, and advocacy efforts
-

VOLUNTEERISM

Demonstrate the impact and benefits of volunteering for both community partners and students

- Continue coordinating existing service in Baltimore:
 - Local Day of Service
 - Community Arts and Services program
 - Community Site Leaders (CSL) - semester long learning
 - France Merrick Fellowships
- Test and plan for larger scale efforts:
 - Plan additional days of service throughout the school year
 - Develop robust service-learning model to:
 - Reflect upon impact of volunteering, learning, and art and design
 - Develop series of dialogues connecting students, staff, and faculty who volunteer through student engagement and/or service-learning

RESOURCES

Leverage MICA resources to support civic engagement in Baltimore and throughout the country.

- Promote and utilize Globe Press as a communication tool for local partners
- Engage alumni network and AICAD (Association of Independent Colleges of Art and Design)
- Ensure MICA staff and faculty participate in local, national and international governing and leadership bodies (for non profit organizations, conferences, etc. Ex: Imagining America, Campus Compact, For Freedoms, Greater Baltimore Cultural Alliance, etc)
- Library is open to the public for art and design research
- Enhance community-engaged grants program; develop a centralized list of grant opportunities focused on civic and community engaged work for MICA students, staff, and faculty

OFF-SITE PARTNERSHIPS / COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

- Connect MICA's voter education and turnout efforts with local Baltimore initiatives; share resources with and support community partners in their voter engagement efforts (ex: Baltimore Design School)
- Expand MICA's innovative and engaging public programming such as Constitution Day, Design Fest, and Think-a-thon, to include more partners;
 - consider opportunities to further connect these events into a cohesive series
- Partner with local organizations, businesses, and neighbors to identify opportunities for collaboration, new programming and support of city-wide initiatives (ex: Baltimore Black Arts District)

EDUCATION

Discourse, public events,
and dialogue

- Expand regular programming that fosters dialogue among MICA students, staff, and faculty (ex: CSE conversations, Lunch and learns, Global Connections, etc.)
- Ensure events are shared with and open to the public
- Develop trainings for students, staff, and faculty to support community + civic-based engagement (ex: Safe Zone training, Social Design social literacy)
- Incorporate history of the Intersection of design + art and activism into course curriculum, and co-curricular programming (ex: First Year Forum; expand “History of Graphic Design” to be a requirement for all students)

ACADEMIC INITIATIVES

- Support and promote faculty-led and course-based initiatives through grants, committees, and course resources (example: Creative Placemaking,, Finding Baltimore course, Select DFAB/ BIOFAB programs, etc.)
- Survey faculty to see who/if they are doing work externally; develop inventory of courses that are working externally
- Convene faculty focus groups to learn about challenges, successes, and opportunities of course-based community-engaged work
 - Expand on fall 2021 workshop

SUPPORT DURING/AFTER ELECTIONS; PREPARING FOR RESULTS

- Election night distraction hour
- Review election time care calendar from 2020 - identify what worked, what to build on

TENTATIVE CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Spring 2022

January 1, 2022 – Deadline to submit the 2021 MICUA Student and Military Voter Empowerment Act Survey

January 15, 2022 – Applications for the 2022 #AskEveryStudent Codesigner Cohort are due

January 18, 2022 – Spring semester classes begin

January 31, 2022 – Deadline for Voter Friendly Campus Statement of Interest

May 5, 2022 – Degree Programs classes end

May 31, 2022 – Deadline for submitting an action plan for Voter Friendly Campus Designation

Fall 2022

August 2022 - RA Training; orientation

August 27, 2022 – Fall semester begins

Second week of classes - Get Involved Fair

September 17, 2022 – Constitution Day

September 20, 2022 – National Voter Registration Day

October 3-7, 2022 – National Voter Education Week

Friday, October 28, 2022 – Vote Early Day

Monday, November 7, 2022 – Election Hero Day

November 8, 2022 – Election Day

January 31, 2023 – Deadline to submit a Voter Friendly Campus Report

March 2023 - Voter Friendly Campus Designations announced

To be added in summer 2022:

- Tabling dates for new student orientation and other fall campus events
- Add key election deadline and dates

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 publicly available on MICA's website and incorporated, as appropriate or requested, into reports to the MICA community (students, staff, faculty and external community members).

VAI will also share the NSLVE data/report, updates, and information through the Center for Creative Citizenship and other MICA news outlets both internally and externally.

After every midterm and presidential election VAI creates a summary report to highlight the breadth of strategies, data collected, main focuses, lessons learned, and next steps.

All reports and updated information are posted to MICA's VAI website, mica.edu/vote

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 each election year. Long-term comparisons to previous years data will be an indicator of success (increased attendance, improved voter turnout rates, etc.). The report will be collaboratively created and publicly distributed.

Quantitative measures may include:

- Tracking clicks on voter registration links on the website, on the course registration page and in email campaigns to determine what strategies are most effective and how to increase TurboVote sign ups
- 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
- 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:

- Survey feedback from VAI student leaders collected each semester and document that outlines what projects they worked on and their recommendations moving forward
- 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