



**CAMPUS  
DEMOCRACY  
CHALLENGE**

## Metropolitan State University 2020 Democratic Engagement Action Plan

Developed by: Jodi Bantley

### **Executive Summary:**

The action plan was developed by staff in the Institute for Community Engagement and Scholarship (ICES) in consultation with the Metropolitan State University Student Association, three student senators (including the president), a leader in Students United (a coalition of student senates in the Minnesota State university system) and a graduate students intern, and with support from LEAD-MN (an association of MN community college student associations) the university's Marketing and Communications Department, President's Office, Dean of Students, the Secretary of State's office and numerous national organizations that are offering resources and ideas. We are implementing the plan virtually, involving students, faculty and staff at 5 Twin Cities campus locations. We seek to provide clear, compelling information about voting, particularly early and absentee, and to engage students in deeper conversations with peers about voting through course-based projects. Training started in August for student-led voter engagement that is getting underway now; weekly communications has been ongoing since early September. Short-term, we aim to increase the number of students who register and vote, and to build civic skills among students engaged in course-based projects and/or serve as student leaders. Longer term, we aim to increase civic agency within the university and in the diverse communities where our students live.

### **Leadership:**

Our leadership team includes the following:

Jodi Bantley, Associate Director: Civic and Community Partnerships, ICES; Katie Peacock, Acting Director, ICES; Brian Higbee, Operations Coordinator, ICES; Cassandra Macedo, Metro State Votes 2020 Communications Intern; Mike Dean, executive director, LEAD-MN; Michael Wall and Nasser Musa, Voter Outreach Specialists, Office of MN Secretary of State and SOS Steve Simon; faculty in six disciplines...

### **Commitment:**

Our campus has signed the Higher Education Presidents' Commitment to Full Student Voter Participation.

Our campus has used the following methods to communicate with students about the election:

By mail, By posting on institutional social media channels, email due out next week; weekly communication from the President

### **Landscape:**

Our campus demographic and voting data:

According to NSLVE, we had a 58% voting rate in 2018, compared to 39% overall and 64% at the top of the range of Carnegie Classified institutions. Of our 12,000+ students (about 7500 FTEs), approximately 6500 register each semester. This is owing to our focus as an institution for non-/post-traditional learners who range in age from 16-70. 51% are Black, Indigenous or People of Color. Fully 3/4 are Pell grant eligible. As a commuter campus, the vast majority live in the Twin Cities metropolitan region. All are currently attending classes online.

**Goals:**

Our campus democratic engagement goals are:

See introduction above.

**Strategy:**

Our campus has used the following strategies and organized the following events:

Classroom voter registration presentations (in-person or virtual), Virtual voter education events (e.g. film screening, debates, lectures series, etc.), student-led dialogues; constant campus/student communication via email and social media

noted above

**NSLVE:**

Metropolitan State University has authorized NSLVE.

**Evaluation:**

We will evaluate our action plan in the following ways:

We are not doing events. The success of the project will be determined by reflective assignments of students who are conducting voter engagement in their own families and communities.

**Reporting:**

We will report our campus action plan and NSLVE reports in the following ways:

We will highlight outcomes of this effort in the ICES Bulletin (all faculty and staff) and possibly, the campus-wide newsletter and/or the President's "Metro Monday" message

Our campus hasn't confirmed a plan to post our NSLVE reports on our campus website.