

Metropolitan State University

2018 Election Preparation

Metropolitan State University
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Metro State Votes Coordinators and Partners

Coordinators

Ed Day, student coordinator, Metro State Votes
Jodi Bantley and Greg Mellas, senior staff, Institute for Community Engagement and Scholarship

Partners

Metro State Votes partners include but are not limited to the following:

Student Senate. Primary contacts, president Dhibo Hussein, Andres Boland.

Student Life and Leadership Development staff. Primary contacts, Phil Fuehrer, Alysia Lajune, Rachel Hanson.

Students United (Statewide student association representing the students of the seven universities in the Minnesota State system). Primary contacts, Executive Director Elsbeth Howe, Campus Coordinator Justin Reuter.

Master's of Advocacy and Political Leadership. Primary contacts, Matt Musel, Matt Filner, Adrienne Falcon.

Metropolitan State Library and Information Center Primary contacts, Amber Williams, Michele Filkins.

Urban Roots (a local nonprofit with ties to Metropolitan State) Primary contacts, Executive Director Lori Arnold.

Neighborhood House (a local nonprofit with ties to Metropolitan State) Primary contacts, Vanessa Edwards.

Dayton's Bluff Community Council (a local nonprofit with ties to Metropolitan State) Primary contacts, Executive Director Deanna Abbott-Foster.

Metropolitan State University Marketing. Primary contact, Robert Boos.

Metropolitan State University TRiO. Primary contact, Andrew Cseter.

Metro State Student Parent Center. Primary contacts, Director Sue Fust.

League of Women's Voters. Primary contacts, Dan Krivit.

About Metropolitan State University

Metropolitan State University has a student body of 11,000 students with locations throughout the greater Minneapolis/St. Paul metropolitan area. Several factors make Metropolitan State different from many four-year campuses. First and foremost, a great number of our students attend part time, there is no student housing, and many students are not of traditional college age. With four permanent campus sites, and about a dozen other contracted sites in the 11-county region to make courses convenient, the

traditional trappings of university life are downplayed. In fact, many students have full-time jobs, own homes, and have families.

As such, traditional voter engagement methods have to be altered to accommodate the atypical student body. For example, because many students own homes and have not moved in years, many students do not need to register to vote each fall, which is not the case on a traditional campus. Additionally, with a high percentage of courses taking place at night (6 pm to 9 pm), many students drive to a campus minutes before class with little time to spare. This means that the orbits of students in different degree programs may never cross. (For example, law enforcement students primarily take classes on the Brooklyn Park campus, which is 27 miles from the St. Paul campus, where the bulk of science education takes place.) However, even though the approach and tactics might differ from most campuses, the goals of Metro State Votes – voter education, voter registration, and GOTV efforts – are similar, though at a smaller scale.

Metro State Votes: Goals, Methods, and Events

Goals

Unlike many campuses that can make a concerted effort each fall to register students who moved because large numbers of students live, study, and work in a concentrated geographical area, Metropolitan State students need to be reached via much smaller networks. With no central location that every student must pass through, tabling is not as effective as at other schools. Similarly, canvassing 11,000 students who live in residences sprinkled throughout an 11-county area is not practical. However, these nontraditional circumstances are not an insurmountable obstacles for the traditional goals of a nonpartisan election awareness effort.

- **Voter Registration.** Many students at Metropolitan State University are already registered to vote and have not moved since the last election cycle. Therefore, voter registration in itself is not an effective conversation starter, which is why Metro State Votes will combine registration with ongoing events and volunteer activities. Metropolitan State students are generally active members of their communities – at school as well as their home residences.
- **Voter Education.** Besides registration and outreach regarding the importance of voting, Metro State Votes will be involved in a number of high-profile events designed to increase awareness and motivate students. (See list of events below). Ongoing voter education will also take place at a smaller scale (as outreach at the student group and classroom level) in the form of short trainings for student organizations and classroom presentations.
- **Get Out The Vote.** This will be the most traditional aspect of the Metro State Votes 2018 campaign as it must occur in the few weeks prior to the election. The main difference is that at Metropolitan State, a higher number of small campaigns that rely on person-to-person contact will be employed.

Metro State Votes, in conjunction with the Institute for Community Engagement and Scholarship, will produce the training materials to help students (and student organizations) conduct their own micro-level/personal voter education campaigns. For details, see methods and tactics below.

Overarching Methods and Ongoing Tactics

The Metro State Votes campaign for 2018 can be divided into two distinct phases:

1. Preparation.
2. Activation.

The **Preparation** phase takes place in Spring 2018. This phase involves personal outreach and trainings to student organizations. The Metro State Votes student coordinator and staff members at the Institute for Community Engagement and Scholarship will produce a packet of materials for students to use in their micro-campaigns (their classes, student organizations, or communities). These packets – to be produced and available by Jan. 9, 2018 – will include but are not limited to:

- Voter registration signage
- Voter registration tracking sheets (as most students will register online)
- Volunteer sign-up sheets
- GOTV sample plan
- Issue brief samples
- Contact information for organizations and resources
- Pledge to Vote forms

The preparation phase will also include **social media outreach**. The Metro State Votes Facebook page will be an ongoing source of nonpartisan news regarding issues related to students and higher education. Metro State Votes will also produce a **webpage** that will serve as an archive for the Facebook posts by topic. More importantly:

The Metro State Votes webpage will be a place students can easily find links to register to vote, find their polling places, and otherwise get involved in the voter-engagement process.

The **Activation** phase takes place in Fall 2018. This phase builds on the spring semester work as a traditional voter-mobilization effort. Student leaders will conduct their micro-level campaigns to mobilize people in their circles. Student organizations will also be encouraged to attend events organized and publicized events by other university and neighborhood organizations.

Events

Events on campus serve a dual purpose. Besides the obvious role of training the students who attend, the promotion of the event itself is part of our general awareness campaign for the 2018 election

Caucus 101. This January 25, 2018, event kicks off the engagement process by training students to get involved at the earliest level. In addition to learning how to become delegates who will determine party-endorsed candidates in high-profile statewide races – including Governor and two U.S. Senate seats – students will learn how to write resolutions to effect intra-party change as well as how to write letters to their representatives and have effective meetings with their local legislators. (Additional specific skill trainings may take place in conjunction with the Master's of Advocacy and Political Leadership program throughout the year.)

Students United Advocacy Day at the Capitol. Annual event takes place every March (specific date TBD) in which students from all seven Minnesota state universities make their presence known and advocate for issues such as student loans, Pell grants, state funding, campus safety initiatives, etc. In addition to

rallies, students are encouraged to meet with their individual legislators to discuss higher-education issues.

Fall Fest. The kickoff event at Metropolitan State University, student organization leaders will by this time be ready for their role in the activation phase of the 2018 campaign by incorporating the importance of voting in promoting their organizational goals.

Constitution Day (Monday, Sept. 17, 2018). Annual event co-sponsored by several academic departments and the Institute for Community Engagement and Scholarship features politicians and civic leaders, typically on a current issue related to the Constitution and emphasizing voter engagement.

National Voter Registration Day (Tuesday, Sept. 25, 2018). Annual event co-sponsored by several academic departments and the Institute for Community Engagement and Scholarship features politicians and civic leaders discussing voter engagement.

Pizza and Politics. This periodic event (though always in October in an election year) co-sponsored by several academic departments and the Institute for Community Engagement and Scholarship features politicians and civic leaders discussing topics ranging from voter engagement, connecting to political parties, local issues and so on.

Gubernatorial and Senatorial Debates and/or debate-watching parties. Student Senators and students in the Advocacy and Political Leadership are among the cosponsors for these annual events.

Election Decompression. This annual event sponsored by the Advocacy and Political Leadership program occurs one to two weeks after each election. Students discuss the results and ways to move forward in concert with the new political landscape.

Measures of Success

Metro State Votes will provide the tracking sheets necessary for student organizations to quantify their number of contacts (because registration alone will not reflect this), volunteer engagement, and event participation. Other metrics will be used to quantify the effect of media outreach and public relations efforts.