

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The MSUvote Committee is a non-partisan committee consisting of staff, faculty, students, local government, and local residents who seek to increase voter education, engagement, and turnout at Michigan State University and in the City of East Lansing among MSU students. The Committee participates in the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge in hopes of bringing awareness and attention to the importance of democratic engagement.

Michigan State University saw an increase in student voting rates from 2014 to 2018. In the past lower student voting rates may have been attributed to state level voting restrictions regarding first-time voters and absentee voting laws. Michigan laws have since changed. Our focus going forward will be on educating students on changes to voting laws and highlighting the benefits of absentee voting.

The MSUvote Committee is working with the Associated Students of MSU (ASMSU - student government), academic colleges, administrators, and community partners to register current and incoming students to vote, providing voter education, and encouraging voting overall. Voter registration opportunities are provided at new and transfer student orientations. Due to COVID19, orientation sessions are offered as virtual modules.

The 2019-2020 academic year will be the second round of a campus field experiment in first-year writing classes. Current students will continue to lead short presentations about the importance and process of voting for first-year students.

We have hired an MSUvote Intern, who also serves as a CEEP Fellow. This intern is planning the following activities with the committee, the Center for Community Engaged Learning, the academic colleges, ASMSU, and community partners:

1. Classroom announcements about the availability of a new online voter registration opportunity available in Michigan with a direct QR code link
2. Voter Education and Registration Event to be held as a virtual webinar - AbsenTea Kick-off featuring prominent elected officials and Alumni

In partnering with student groups and academic and administrative departments, MSUvote aims to increase our presence on campus for new and returning students, encouraging them to register and to vote.

LEADERSHIP:

The MSUvote Committee is comprised of multiple campus and community stakeholders. The Committee Co-chairs provide leadership, spearheads initiatives and are consistently present. Committee members play more specific roles and work on particular initiatives. The group is inclusive of any stakeholders who wish to join and commit to increasing voter registration, improving voter education and increasing voter participation on Election Day. Potential new members in the Fall 2020 semester may include MSU Athletic Student Services and a member of the MSU Communications Team.

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MSUvote Co-Chairs:

Renee Brown, Director, MSU Center for Community Engaged Learning (CCEL)
Suchitra Webster, MSU Community Liaison

MSUvote Committee Members:

Tova Carter, MSUvote Fellow
Maysa Sitar, Associated Students of MSU (ASMSU) Vice President for Governmental Affairs
Morris Arvoy, Director of Communications, Residential College in the Arts & Humanities
Sarah Reckhow, Faculty, Political Science, College of Social Science
Kjerstin Thorson, Faculty, Communication Arts & Sciences
Jennifer Shuster, East Lansing City Clerk
Marilyn Wilson, League of Women Voters
Talyce Murray, MSU student and Campus Election Engagement Project
Spartan Ambassadors
ASMSU Members
WDBM Radio
Council of Graduate Students Representative
Residence Education and Housing Services Representative
Registered Student Organizations
CCEL staff

MSUvote Committee Partners:

Barb Byrum, Clerk, Ingham County
Christopher Long, Dean, College of Arts and Letters

Leadership Succession Plans:

The co-chairs of MSUvote represent MSU Outreach & Engagement, MSU Student Affairs and Services, and MSU Government Relations. In the event that the current co-chairs are unable to continue in their leadership roles, executive leadership from those divisions will appoint appropriate leadership. The MSUvote team is developing a new member orientation session and will implement it with new MSUvote coalition team in the Fall 2020 semester. Additionally, a specific request for new committee members will be made of all 17 colleges at MSU to assure that there is representation across disciplines in addition to the existing committee membership.

COMMITMENT:

Michigan State University's mission statement is:

As a public, research-intensive, land-grant university funded in part by the state of Michigan, our mission is to advance knowledge and transform lives by:

- *providing outstanding undergraduate, graduate, and professional education to promising, qualified students in order to prepare them to contribute fully to society as globally engaged citizen leaders*
- *conducting research of the highest caliber that seeks to answer questions and create solutions in order to expand human understanding and make a positive difference, both locally and globally*

- *advancing outreach, engagement, and economic development activities that are innovative, research-driven, and lead to a better quality of life for individuals and communities, at home and around the world*

Michigan State is committed to a set of undergraduate learning goals, including:

Effective Citizenship

The MSU graduate participates as a member of local, national, and global communities and has the capacity to lead in an increasingly interdependent world.

- Understands the structures of local, national, and global governance systems and acts effectively within those structures in both individual and collaborative ways.
- Applies knowledge and abilities to solve societal problems in ethical ways

Michigan State University also demonstrates institutional commitment through engagement in the following:

1. Campus Compact
2. Big Ten Voting Challenge
3. Michigan Collegiate Voting Challenge
4. Voter Friendly Campus
5. All In Voting Challenge
6. Andrew Goodman Foundation – Vote Everywhere
7. Commission on Presidential Debates
8. Campus Vote Project
9. Campus Election Engagement Project
10. Ask Every Student – Design Campus
11. National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) Research Partner Campus

Our MSU President, has signed the All In Voting Challenge Presidential Commitment indicating his commitment to democratic engagement publically.

In addition to those institutional commitments, MSUvote and the Center for Community Engaged Learning have made the following commitments on behalf of the university:

REGISTRATION. EDUCATION. PARTICIPATION.

MSUvote is your on-campus, non-partisan information source for the upcoming elections. We are calling on Spartans far and wide to register to vote this election season, to educate themselves on the issues that will affect them and their communities and participate in local, state, and federal elections

Center for Community Engaged Learning

In partnership with campus and community, the Center for Community Engaged Learning advances community engaged learning at Michigan State University and prepares students for lifelong civic and social responsibility.

LANDSCAPE:

The remainder of 2020 brings at least two major opportunities for students to engage in the voting process: the August State Primary and the November General Election. With significant popular

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interest in all facets of the 2020 National Election and sweeping changes in Michigan Voting Law, including no reason absentee voting and same day registration, voter turnout is anticipated to far exceed 2016 levels. One of our committee members sits on the Michigan Secretary of State's Collegiate Student Advisory Task Force and a new President and Provost at MSU have brought renewed interest in political and civic engagement.

According to our NSLVE data, in 2016 62.8% of all MSU students were registered to vote. Of registered students, 66.8% voted and in total, 41.9% of MSU students voted. To bolster these numbers and capitalize on the opportunities inherent in the landscape, MSU has joined in the B1G Ten Voting Challenge, the Michigan Collegiate Voting Challenge, hosts a Campus Election Education Project Fellow, and will renew its Voter Friendly Campus status.

We are also willing and eager to leverage student engagement by partnering with any other campus group or entity committed to our registration, education and participation objectives. For instance, MSUvote was one of the sponsors of the Martin Luther King Jr. Day Voter Registration activities, along with the MSU Administrative Professional Association, Women's Advisory Committee for Support Staff, League of Women Voters and the Michigan Education Association.

Our efforts with the New Student Orientation (NSO) focus heavily on the ability for Michiganders to vote no-reason absentee. We have made specific efforts to explain that process to Michigan students and to provide state specific information and resources to our out-of-state students.

To further the culture of democratic engagement on our campus we have joined the Commission on Presidential Debates and will host in-person or virtual (depending on COVID19 status) Debate Watch Programs for the presidential and vice-presidential debates.

A deeper analysis of our 2018 NSLVE data by field of study will allow us to supplement our efforts in specific academic departments. That analysis and strategy development will occur in the summer of 2020.

GOALS:

Short Term Goals

MSUvote will work with campus and community partners to increase the 2020 overall MSU student voting rate to at least 55%.

- Partner with the Secretary of State's Office to bring the mobile SOS office to campus
- Provide voter registration opportunities through new student orientation by creating modular coursework
- Encourage absentee voting

MSUvote will work closely with landlords and property managers to provide voter registration and participation information to the 69% of all students who live off campus.

- Partner with landlords and property managers to disseminate voting information via social media

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- Host voter registration or education drives at off campus properties
- NSLVE data looks at 31 fields of study. In the 2016 election, at MSU, 24 of those disciplinary areas experienced a drop in participation from the 2012 Election. **In 2020, we will work to show a positive gain in at least 25 of the 31 fields of study.**
- Identify the 24 disciplinary areas that saw a drop to the specific colleges and departments
- Partner with college leadership to create a campaign for each of the 24 areas to understand how elections can impact their disciplines

MSUvote will work closely with Residence Education and Housing Services to provide registration and voting information via all on-campus residential neighborhoods.

- Work with community directors to provide programming that is neighborhood and floor specific
- Create messaging to go on dining hall table tents or via REHS and Live On social messaging
- Have local election officials on hand in dining halls and public spaces within REHS to assist students with registering and absentee ballot applications

Long Term Goals

- MSUvote will work with all MSU College Deans to create opportunities for civic discourse and engagement opportunities in each college.
- MSUvote will work to promote and secure Election Day as a holiday designed to increase student participation on Election Day.
- MSUvote will work to infuse civic engagement activities into the ethos of the university, making voting a norm for Spartans.

STRATEGY:

Achieving our long term and short term objectives will require a strategy that is fully comprehensive and requires support and partnership with the university's executive leadership. Along with buy-in from academic units, the involvement and interest of the Offices of the President and Provost, Government Relations, the Division of Student Affairs and Services, and University Outreach & Engagement are essential.

The current planned and desired activities for the remainder of 2020 include the following:

- Student voter registration at new and transfer student orientations. This will not occur at an optional resource fair, but rather has been integrated into the program itself, through creation of an online module and 1 credit fall class.
- Integration of registration and absentee education and opportunities into Fall Welcome and Convocation
- Continuation of utilizing the MSUvote.msu.edu website and social media accounts to foster student engagement

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- Addition of a member of the MSU Communications Team to the MSUvote Committee, with an expectation that this person will assist in promotion of all endeavors and assist with digital content
- Allocation of resources to hire an employee dedicated to MSUvote activities
- College Deans Communication Campaign addressing how voting impacts the disciplines
- Voter registration drives in residence halls year around (virtual most likely)
- Provide information to out-of-state students who wish to vote in their home communities.
- Class announcements re: the new online voter registration option and QR code link
- Year 2 of the student voter education field study with first-year writing courses
- Absentee Ballot voter education, registration, and absentee application drive events
- Conversion of the 2018 pilot program which transported students to the polls to a more comprehensive program, which would include off-campus students
- Promotion of democratic engagement campus-wide by offering students the opportunity to log their voter education activities and get out the vote efforts in the MSU Civic Life App. This will allow for students to receive recognition toward the Spartan Volunteer Service Award and earn endorsements on their co-curricular record – My Spartan Story. Please note this is only for voter education and get out the vote. Students will not be able to log registering to vote or voting.

REPORTING:

- MSUvote and partner efforts, student voter registration, and turn-out will be reported in the biennial MSU Community Engaged Learning Index. The data for this campus report is collected annually and reported biennially. This report is shared with campus and community.
- MSU Communications and Collegiate Communication on outcomes is anticipated. MSUvote will also track and provide local rates of participation.
- NSLVE summary data and other report summaries will be posted to the MSUvote webpage.

EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT:

MSU student voting efforts will be evaluated through the analyzation of the following:

- NSLVE data
- City and County Clerk analysis
- Data from the continuation of field experience with first year writing courses
- MSUvote Committee and Partners focus groups post-election.
- Event participation tracking an evaluation

SUMMER 2020 KEY DATES

DATE	EVENT
June-July 2020	Registration @ New Student Orientation
August 4, 2020	State Primary Election

FALL 2020 KEY DATES

DATE	EVENT
August 30, 2020	Registration/Education at Fall Colloquium
September 2, 2020	FIRST DAY of FS 20
September 17, 2020	Constitution Day
September 22, 2020	National Voter Registration Day
September 29, 2020	Presidential Debate, Notre Dame University
October 7, 2020	Vice Presidential Debate, University of Utah
October 15, 2020	Presidential Debate, University of Michigan
October 22, 2020	Presidential Debate, Belmont University
October 24, 2020	Vote Early Day
November 3, 2020	General Election

Additional Information:

The 2020-2021 academic year will bring the second year of a campus field experiment in first-year writing classes. Current students will continue to lead short presentations about the importance and process of voting for first-year students. This work is being spearheaded by faculty in the Department of Political Science – Dr. Dan Bergen and Dr. Sarah Reckhow. MSUvote Co-Chairs have also made a connection with Dr. Bump Halbritter in the College of Arts and Letters, who oversees all first year writing at MSU. The College of Communication Arts and Sciences has been well represented by Dr. Kjerstin Thorson, an MSU Teacher-Scholar Award recipient and leader in the field of Advertising.

MSUvote Committee Chairs, Renee Brown and Suchitra Webster have collaborated with the Dean of the College of Arts and Letters, Chris Long on forming a Group of Deans to advance student democratic engagement. The following suggestions are under consideration:

Suggested action items for Deans to develop a campus culture of democratic engagement:

1. Participate in a media campaign that focuses on why we/deans vote. This would feature deans making a personal statement and sharing details about their own voting experience, when they voted for the first time, what issues are important to their respective disciplines, a time when they voted and it made a real difference. Extend the invitation to participate in this media event to notable faculty, staff, and students as well.
2. Host Absentee parties in the colleges to educate students about the changes in Michigan Voting Laws and provide an opportunity for students to register to vote and/or apply for absentee voting

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3. Host issue-based discussions that provide students a space to ask questions and discuss important current events and election details.
4. Create Election Day programming and activities for ALL students (whether eligible to vote or not). Encouraging students to sign up as election workers is another way to bolster involvement and assist local clerks.
5. Encourage all faculty to discuss registration and voting in all classes, utilizing information provided by clerks. Place key information and dates on course syllabi and in D2L.
6. Designate a college representative to the MSUvote campus collaborative meetings to connect college level work to campus efforts
7. Work with your college's ASMSU general assembly members on all aspects of democratic engagement.
8. Team with other colleges or compete with other colleges on civic engagement activities (voter registration, absentee applications, best programming, etc.).
9. Utilize your college's communications team to prioritize the culture of democratic engagement, from the creation of social media posts to the development of apps and videos.
10. Review the AACU Learn-Engage-Vote Document with college leadership for additional ideas and links to improve participation: <https://www.aacu.org/clde/LearnEngageVote>
11. Text and email ALL MSU students critical messages regarding registration and absentee voting 4 times between the start of classes and Election Day.
12. Ask area clerks to host an event at the MSU library to register students and to have students complete absentee ballot applications.