

Democratic Engagement Action Plan – Fall 2024

Executive Summary

Milwaukee Area Technical College (MATC) is located in Milwaukee, WI which is one of the most segregated cities in the United States. As a two year institution that expands across 5 locations, MATC is the largest technical college in the state of Wisconsin. The college is committed through its Vision to be “The best choice in education, where everyone can succeed”. This commitment includes activation through civic engagement and voter turnout. However, despite intentional efforts, there is still room for improvement.

The COVID-19 pandemic has left the college with fewer students and students attending online at a higher rate than pre-pandemic. This change in engagement has created new challenges for the college community to get the vote out amongst the student body. As a result, the college has prepared multiple strategies to engage the student body in civic engagement and voter turnout.

The following action plan for the Fall 2024 and Spring 2025 election cycles was constructed by Erich Zeimantz, Director of Student Life with input from the leadership team below and the Campus Vote Project Democracy Fellows. This action plan represents the continued commitment from the college to develop students in voting and civic engagement and a goal of increasing student access and participation in elections.

Leadership

Milwaukee Area Technical College is engaging members of the faculty, staff, and students to build a network of participants for voter engagement. This includes working with external partners such as DoSomething and the Campus Vote Project. Below are members currently working on this project:

- Dr. Phillip King, Executive Vice President of Student Success
- Dr. Yan Wang, Vice President of Enrollment and Retention
- Christopher Morgan, Assistant General Counsel
- Tony Taglavia, Chief Marketing Officer
- Dr. Sadique Isahaku, Executive Dean, Academic Strategy & Innovation
- Equan Burrows, Dean of Student Experience
- Erich Zeimantz, Director Student Life
- District Student Association Representative(s) (Students)
- Paulina Gutiérrez, Executive Director of Milwaukee’s Election Commission

Commitment

At Milwaukee Area Technical College the campus is passionate about student voter turnout. This includes the college's leadership through employees to students. Students are engaged frequently by non-partisan groups to engage in voting and the college has participated in projects such as *I am a Voter* and serves as an early voting site.

Additionally, the college takes various steps throughout the college to engage students and the community on voter engagement. Civic engagement is also taught in classes as described below and reinforced through student experiences such as the American Student Association of Community College Advocacy Conference, Wisconsin Student Government Legislative Seminar, and Camp 2030.

Landscape

MATC is the largest 2-year technical college in the state of Wisconsin with 30,226 students served (2023) and a diverse student body with 56% students of color. As a result, the College greatly values the work of civic engagement and voter activation.

The College and Student Life team are intentionally working to increase early voter registration, increasing in and out-of-class civic learning, and messaging appropriately about how and when students, staff, and the community can participate in tabling and use of speech zones, and assistance with transportation. With data not currently available, we are working on efforts to ensure the best outcomes possible for voting registration and turn out.

Additionally, during the pandemic some student conferences and opportunities were reduced due to safety concerns. The College is committed to re-initiating these opportunities and expanding them.

Goals

The Milwaukee Area Technical College is committed to all of the above actions in the short term election cycle. Based on re-enrollment in the NSLVE Tufts Study and feedback from the next election cycle, the College will use the future data to make longer term and specific goals. Currently the data from 2020 and 2022 Tufts has not been received. Specifically, the College's goals for the 2024 elections:

- Increase voter education and awareness on campus
- Thoroughly advertise early voting activities
- Increase civic participation on campus
- Continue to provide support to ensure all student have access to vote

National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE)

Milwaukee Area Technical College has committed to reauthorizing in the NSLVE study for the next 10 years and is currently finishing up the reauthorization process. Additionally, the college is working with NSLVE staff currently to get a hold of the past data. The college is looking forward to using this data to refine future practices and expand voter participation.

Strategy

Strategy: Communication and Early Voting

The City of Milwaukee Elections Commission identified the college as an early voting and registration site for both the spring presidential preference primary and election as well as the general election in fall 2024. The elections commission reviews promotional language used by the college.

Marketing and Communications worked with Student Life to promote early voting and the election holistically via printed campus advertising, website, Campus Labs Engage - student activities website, The Week Ahead student and employee newsletters, digital display screens on campuses (RealEyes) and social media (see Twitter, Facebook examples; also posted to Instagram).

Strategy: In and Out-of-Class Civic Engagement and Partnerships

Areas and Classes

Social Science: SOCSCI-221 (American National Government and Politics Today) and SOCSCI-222 (State and Local Government) specifically addresses civic engagement and voting. Elements of civic engagement are also addressed in SOCSCI-197 (Contemporary American Society) and SOCSCI-203 (Introduction to Sociology). At MATC, this formal instruction helps students understand the vital importance of civic engagement.

Student Conferences and Opportunities for Civic Engagement

MATC Student Life supports student leader participation in both the American Student Association of Community College (ASACC) Advocacy Conference and Wisconsin Student Government (WSG) Legislative Seminar. Furthermore, student leaders from the District Student Association (college's student government) participate in Wisconsin Student Government throughout the academic year.

Furthermore, Student Life is adding an opportunity for a delegation of 6 students to attend the Camp 2030 which is a global community of young Changemakers taking action to end poverty, inequality, injustice, and climate change by the year 2030. This week-long experience will engage students in conversations and planning around global issues. Students will put together a proposal and present during the Global Goals Week in New York City.

These opportunities provide students with experiences to increase the use of their voice in advocacy, meet and advocate to government officials at the state and federal level, and expand their understanding of government operations in a practical hands-on method. Finally, these experiences have helped students not only see the value of voting but commit to advocating for their fellow students to join them in voting.

Partnership Growth and Expansion

MATC is partnering with the following organizations to expand our campus impact.

Campus Vote Project to:

- Hosting the Wisconsin 2024 Fall Campus Vote Project Summit
- Provide materials on voting directly to students
- Application to become a Voter Friendly Campus
- Partnering with Campus Vote Project Democracy Fellows to distribute information to students and the community.
- Rejoin the NSLVE Tufts Study on student voter engagement metrics.
- Host student facing voter engagement activities and events

DoSomething - Art of Democracy

MATC is partnering with DoSomething to host their Art of Democracy program in the Fall 2024/2025 term. This event brings together the following actions:

- Supports student civic engagement
- Registering to Vote
- Helps students find their civic identity
- Increases student engagement and voter participation

There is a plan being developed with the partners above to host the Wisconsin Campus Voting Summit on September 27th and 28th, 2024 on MATC's campus.

Tabling Events and Information Distribution

Student Life is partnering with the Campus Vote Project to host tabling events directly to students to distribute information to get out the vote. Tabling provided by Student Life is non-partisan in nature and Student Life will arrange for these events.

Furthermore, additional groups and organizations such as the League of Women Voters, SuperMarket Legends, and many others provide students with voter registration and educational information on a frequent basis. These groups and others are able to share information on campus in accordance with the college's Free Speech and Public Assembly procedures.

Student Life is beginning to distribute voter registration information with every student ID. This information will be distributed starting this summer so students know how to use their valid Stormer Pass Student ID as a valid voter ID and where to find more information regarding upcoming voting opportunities.

Strategy: Transportation

One-way bus passes and Ozaukee County Taxi Service (Shared Ride) are distributed to students who don't qualify for the UPass (bus pass program) to the polls on election days. This allows for students who may have transportation access challenges to get to the polls to ensure they can participate in voting no matter which of our 5 locations they are attending.

Reporting

MATC is committed to transparency and accountability in our voter efforts. As a result, the College will be sharing this plan publicly on the Voter Information Libraries website. Additionally, the NSLVE report will be shared if applicable data is available.

Evaluation

MATC will have succeeded in executing this action plan if voter registration and voter turn out numbers increase compared to our past election data. The increase in number of activities and student participation in the activities will also be tracked.

Additionally, successful participation in student cohorts for the 3 student trips and conferences will also be measured and student feedback on the participation will be gathered. The feedback will include information regarding the impact of these opportunities.