

Minnesota State University, Mankato's Get Out The Vote Action Plan 2024

Executive Summary:

The leadership structure for Get Out the Vote 2024 on our campus, Minnesota State University, Mankato comprises four voting ambassadors, led by department head Jeremy Riesenberg, with support from university officials and student government. The ambassador team includes Kai Dwyer, Fischer Kirven, Lily Mohr, and Lili Ceballos. Current campus engagement with voter registration on our campus is limited. Past issues with communication about voting locations highlight the need for improved awareness strategies. As part of our research on what voting information our classmates have at hand, we created a survey to gain insight. Survey findings indicate varying levels of awareness about voting locations and political engagement among students. While resources for voter information are perceived as effective, there's room for improvement in spreading awareness, particularly among out-of-state students. Therefore, we are committed to presenting accurate and important voter information to our campus. To achieve the goals that we have set as a team we came up with a few strategies. Strategies include utilizing posters, social media, campus events, and collaboration with political clubs. At the end of our work in the fall semester, we hope to achieve effectiveness on voting awareness. We hope to gather data detailing what worked well and what improvements may have to be made going forward.

Leadership:

The leadership for Get Out the Vote 2024, located on our campus, is four voting ambassadors, a department head, and input as needed from higher ups within the university and the student government. The four voting ambassadors are Kai Dwyer, Fischer Kirven, Lily Mohr, and Lili Ceballos, who are also students on campus. The department head leading and approving the ambassador's work is Jeremy Riesenberg. The ambassador team will also be working with coordinating some meetings with the leaders of the political clubs on campus, to be better able to support them during the voting season. The diversity of the student government, higher ups, and the political clubs are currently unknown as they fluctuate with the school year, so the fall makeup of these groups is currently unknown. The main team diversity is split evenly between genders, majors, and skills to be used.

Commitment:

The current campus involvement with voter registration, awareness, and political activeness is small, headed typically by the political clubs themselves at events to gain new members, or by one or two people within the staff and student government during elections. The town has an off campus voting location, but when the location was changed right before primaries it was not advertised well, and thus could have led to confusion and loss of voters. While we do not currently know where off campus voting sites will be located, we do know that one will be located in the Preska Resident Community building.

Landscape:

Survey reports found that around 50% of participants knew where the voting locations near campus are. 25% of participants had an idea of where voting locations near campus were, and the final 25% of participants did not know where voting locations are. This could be improved with advertising and better awareness spreading. Our reports did not show data for out-of-state

students' awareness of how to register in their home states, as we did not have any responses from out-of-state students. 75% of participants stated they were politically involved, while the remaining 25% stated they did not feel involved. Additionally, 75% of participants stated they were aware of political clubs available on campus, while 25 percent of participants said they were unaware of political clubs and organizations on campus. Furthermore, 50% of participants stated it would be most ideal to spread voter information via email, while the remaining 50% preferred the use of posters spread around campus. In terms of voting registration, 75% of participants stated they would be interested to vote if someone would help them register. The remaining 25% stated they would definitively register to vote if someone was available to help them. 100% of participants felt there were effective resources to help students obtain their voter information. 75% of participants felt the campus does a good job of sharing voter information, while the remaining 25% stated they did not feel the campus does a good job of spreading voter information. 75% of participants stated they were registered to vote at their address, while 25% were not registered. This year was 50% of participants' first election, while the remaining 50% had experience in previous elections.

Goals:

Our team has short term and long-term goals for working together this year. The short-term goals are to:

Spread Voter Awareness in various ways.

Increase Voter Registration and Participation for the 2024 election season by registering 200 students.

The major long-term goal is:

Set up an achievable schedule and plan for use with the next Get Out the Vote Team on campus.

Strategy:

To complete the short-term goals, we plan to utilize posters, University app, social media, tabling in the student union, and the political clubs on campus to help spread awareness of voter registration, rights, locations, dates, and important events that are taking place due to the election, such as debates. This will be beneficial to complete both short term goals, as many students are aware of the steps they need to take for registration or the dates that relate to voting, especially if this is their first election.

For the long-term goal of establishing a schedule and plan of action for the next Get Out the Vote Team, a lot of that will be done by experimenting with what works for us, both as a team and on spreading awareness across campus. Towards the end of the spring and fall semesters we will meet to discuss what worked for us and the schedule we have made for the planning and preparation semester (spring) and then how well we felt those plans were executed during the voting season (fall semester). Our final schedule and resources would be left in the hands of the staff lead, Jeremy Riesenberg.

NSLVE:

According to the statistics provided to us by the National Study of Learning, Voting & Engagement, or NSLVE, students at MNSU Mankato show high levels of civic engagement across the board. NSLVE reports that 74.7% of eligible students voted on Election Day in 2020,

an increase of 10.2 percentage points from the 2016 election. Additionally, 86.3% of eligible students registered to vote in 2020. This data suggests that students at MNSU Mankato are knowledgeable when it comes to the processes of voting and registering to vote.

Between the 2016 and 2020 presidential elections, the percentage of people who voted in-person fell from 81% to 46%. Some may view this as evidence that voters are beginning to favor absentee ballots, but that assumption fails to take COVID-19 restrictions into account. In truth, it is impossible to predict which style of voting will be more popular in 2024 based solely on data from the 2016, 2018, and 2020 elections. The safest option would be to prepare resources for both styles equally.

Finally, the level of civic engagement appeared to rise among all racial/ethnic groups, genders, and ages on campus. The same can be said of all fields of study, with the exception of two: Foreign Languages, Literature, and Linguistics (which experienced no change in voting rate between 2016 and 2020), and Liberal Arts, and Sciences, and Humanities (which experienced a 9% decrease in voting rate between 2016 and 2020).

Reporting Data:

With the current make-up of the team, emails are sent to update as progress is made, both by the ambassadors to the department head and the department head to higher ups as requested, as well as social media posts for the college population to be informed of progress. We are working on getting notifications sent via the university app, and the possibility of posters to spread information gained as well. Some students have expressed an interest in an email format of updates, such as a mailing list and that can be implemented based on student interest in the fall, post orientation fair.

Evaluation:

Due to the semester and funding for our team ending at the start of December we will be judging our completion of our goals by the number of people we helped register, how involved students seemed to be during activities hosted by us, and our overall impressions of how busy the voting site on campus was during the election. If we are able to get final numbers for how many students turned out to vote in the presidential election, we will also factor that in as well. Going on overall interaction and the goal of registering at least 200 students in the fall semester, that is what we will use to determine our success with our goals.