



# THE UNIVERSITY OF MAINE

## UMAINE VOTER ACTIVATION TEAM Draft Action Plan (Fall 2018)



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**Objective:** To coordinate on campus efforts at voter registration, voter education, and voter turnout with the larger goal of increasing on campus political participation. We will utilize our 2014 National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement report as a baseline for comparison and assessment of our efforts. We want to increase our overall voter registration and turnout rates relative to 2014 and will be working with partners at the [All-In Campus Democracy Challenge](#) for logistical support and advice in both this electoral cycle and those to come. We aspire to be an All-In “silver seal” campus (with a voting rate between 60-69% by the 2020 election).

**Background & Institutional Landscape:** The state of Maine is in many ways a model for democracy and political participation in the United States. We consistently have among the highest voter turnout rates in the country. This is both a function of our political culture and supportive institutions. Maine was the first state to institute same-day voter registration in 1973, and has both a citizen legislature, and the ability of citizens to directly pass and overturn laws via the “citizen’s initiatives” and the “people’s veto.”

The University of Maine, relative to other college campuses and turnout among young people more generally, does fairly well. We frequently surpass national registration and voting rate averages. And in 2017, we were recognized with a bronze seal from the All-In Campus Democracy Challenge for having a student voting rate between 50 and 60%. In addition, since 2016, all voting in the town of Orono takes place directly on campus at the Field House.

	Student Voter Registration Rates		Student Voter Turnout Rates	
	<u>UMaine</u>	National	<u>UMaine</u>	National
2012	71.8%	69.0%	53.6%	46.9%
2014	*	62.1%	*	17.9%
2016	70.4%	70.6%	50.5%	50.4%

\*waiting on data from NSLVE

However, in 2016, we fell slightly below the average for college campuses in both registration and voting rate. In addition, as with elections generally, we see a significant decrease in voter turnout in the midterm elections. The 2012/2016 and 2014 National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) Campus Reports for UMaine are contained within this Google folder and contain a wealth of data about our performance over time. The good news is that in a state like Maine and a university like ours, we have a supportive environment for organizing and activating voters.

The University of Maine is committed to community engagement, civic learning, and creating a space for robust and civil democratic discourse. The University strives to provide students with a rich array of educational opportunities while also promoting and cultivating responsible citizen-scholars.

As the flagship campus of the University of Maine system and a land and sea grant institution, community engagement and service to the state make up a core aspect of our institutional mission. In 2008, the University of Maine was one of the first two institutions (along with Bates) awarded the Community Engagement classification by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. This classification was renewed in 2015. In addition, numerous faculty, departments, and research centers at the University of Maine have made service to the community and the state an integral part of their teaching, research, and service portfolios.

Empowering students to make informed political choices and building a culture of civic responsibility around voting is linked to this aspect of our institutional mission. The UMaine Voter Activation Team (UVAT) will build upon the strategies employed in prior election years, and aims to enhance our engagement with partners both on and off-campus to engage voters.

**UMaine Voter Activation Team (UVAT) Leadership:**

Rob Glover, Associate Professor of Political Science and Honors (Team Coordinator)

Melissa Ladenheim, Associate Dean of the Honors College

Richard Powell, Professor of Political Science and Director of the Cohen Institute for Leadership and Public Service

Amy Blackstone, Professor of Sociology & co-Director of the Margaret Chase Smith Policy Center

Jacquelyn Gill, Assistant Professor, Climate Change Institute & School of Biology and Ecology

Mindy Crandall, Assistant Professor, School of Forest Resources

Michael Wittmann, Professor, Physics & Astronomy

Liam Riordan, Professor, History

Susan Gardner-Dunlea, Professor & Director of Women's, Gender & Sexuality Studies and the Rising Tide Center

Dana Carver-Bialer, Graduate Student-Communication & Journalism

Hope Eye, Graduate Student-School of Policy and International Affairs

Matt Gonnerman, Graduate Student-Wildlife, Fisheries, and Conservation Biology

Jonathan Bomer, graduate student, President of Graduate Student Government

Logan Aramando, Undergraduate Student President

Bentley Simpson, Undergraduate Student Senate VP

Taylor Cray, Undergraduate Student VP for Student Organizations

\_\_\_\_\_, undergraduate student, Representative from the UMaine College Republicans

Liam Kent, undergraduate student, Representative from the UMaine College Democrats

Lauri Sidelko, Director of the Student Wellness Resource Center and of the UMaine UVote Initiative

Hailey Bryant, UMaine UVote Undergraduate Voter Engagement Intern

**Off-Campus Partners:**

Maine Citizens for Clean Elections, Maine League of Women Voters, All in Campus Democracy Challenge, National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement, Scholars Strategy Network, Democratic Party, Republican Party, individual candidates and their campaign teams, Indivisible, Maine People's Alliance, Maine Campus Compact.

**Action Plan:**

The following pages lay out what we have discussed thus far as “action steps” for working to meet the objectives above. This is a tentative plan and details/specifics may shift as we get closer to the Fall 2016 semester. The table lays out actions, timing, who will be responsible, as well as the resources needed, potential obstacles, and who we will need to be in communication with to ensure that we meet our goals.

<b>Action</b>	<b>Who?</b>	<b>When?</b>	<b>Resources/Support</b>	<b>Potential Challenges</b>	<b>Communication</b>
<i>(What needs to be done?)</i>	<i>(Who will take action?)</i>	<i>(By when?)</i>	<i>(What resources will be needed? What are available?)</i>	<i>(Any potential obstacles we might face in completing this step?)</i>	<i>(Who will need to be informed about these actions?)</i>
<b>Make UMaine U-Vote website clearinghouse of information related to 2018 mid-term election.</b>	Lauri and committee	Already lots of information there, needs to be updated	Lauri, Hailey, and peer educators. Shouldn't need resources beyond what already exists?	Ensuring broad awareness among faculty, students, staff of UVote website and social media presence.	As much of the campus community as possible. Promote through on-campus social media.
<b>Develop an FaQ related to questions about student voter eligibility or determine if this already exists.</b>	Rob, others?	First week of semester.	Might be helpful to have some sort of tangible resource (handout /postcard, etc.) to offer to students on this issue.	Not sure there would be any. Would be potential costs if we were going to print something. Maine Secretary of State has this info, but could be simplified.	Disseminate widely and have available wherever voter registration is happening on campus
<b>Contact &amp; communication with student orgs. Announcements in person about voter registration and GOTV at meetings if possible.</b>	Lauri, Hailey, Taylor (contact), and all.	ASAP and ongoing.	Volunteers, voter reg. cards and FaQ if we develop one.	Updating officer listings and contact info., If doing in person announcements determining meeting schedules, mobilization of volunteers. May want to work with off campus groups here.	Student govt, Student life, possibly off-campus partners and outreach partners.

<b>Recruit student volunteers to serve as registrants on Election Day.</b>	Lauri, Hailey, Rob, Town of Orono, Dept. of Political Science, MCS Policy Center?	ASAP and ongoing.	Student volunteer hours, perhaps extra credit and accommodations for students who commit.		Touch base with town of Orono, develop shared list of volunteers & contact info.
<b>Voter Registration tabling as part of the Welcome Weekend Day of Service.</b>	Lauri.	Already taken care of.	Tables, materials, voter reg. cards.	None.	All set.
<b>Voter registration tabling as part of the student organization fair/Constitution Day</b>	UMaine UVote, Hayley, Lauri, Rob.	Date for this org fair is Wednesday, Sept 5 <sup>th</sup> . Constitution Day is Sept. 17.	Lauri and others likely have a bit of an infrastructure for this, so perhaps they can take the lead?	None immediately apparent.	Coordinate with CASE, and reserve table.
<b>Send postcard to all on campus addresses announcing this initiative and directing them to the UMaine UVote website?</b>	Possibly?--we talked about doing this in 2016 but did not end up doing it.	Would want to do this early in the Fall semester.	Approximately \$200 to send a postcard to everyone on campus. Can allocate from the YI budget.	None immediately apparent.	Printing Services, Division of Marketing and Communication.
<b>E-postcard for distribution to student government email lists.</b>	Rob, Lauri, Jon Bomer, Logan Aramando, Bentley Simpson.	Early Fall.	None needed.	None immediately apparent.	Undergraduate and graduate student government secretaries.
<b>Connect with off-campus orgs that want to do voter registration on campus.</b>	Rob, Lauri.	Tend to be on campus doing voter registration efforts every election cycle. Perhaps we can check in Late summer 2016.	None needed.	None apparent.	Committee. Partner student orgs if campaign/party needs sponsor. Broader campus community to alert them of ongoing efforts at voter registration.

<b>Check-in with All in Campus Democracy Challenge</b>	Rob.	Early Fall.	None needed. Basically, I'd be checking in to discuss what we'd done thus far and what we intended to do in the final weeks leading up to election to see if the representatives have any advice or suggestions or can offer any support.	None apparent.	Rob can report back to the committee on this.
<b>Coordinate events related to voter education?</b>	Rob, Claire, Rich, Melissa, Honors College SAB, Rising Tide, Dept. of Political Science, College Dems, College Republicans, other student orgs, anyone else?	Would want to do this in the interim period between the close of on-campus registration and election day (basically month of October).	Will have to work out a full budget—this might consume some resources (food and refreshments, renting of space, furniture, A/V equipment, advertising, etc.) It's also likely the type of event that we can cobble together resources from units across campus (Student govt., Honors College, Political Science, CLAS, president's office, MSC Policy Center, etc.).	Biggest challenge with such events is typically making sure campus community is aware of this and ensuring that we get a healthy turnout. Would have to work on a turnout and publicity plan in the Fall.	Voter activation team, UMaine Marketing and Comm., College email lists and newsletters, faculty, students, etc. There would be significant interest in the Political Science department in organizing events around the election. College Dems and College Republicans may also be interested.
<b>Host Debate Watch Event? Host debates? Host candidate &amp; VIP visits?</b>	Rob, Rich, Honors College, Depts, Student Life, Student Orgs, Student government.	TBD--if we want to plan something, we should get started ASAP. But we will have to simply be responsive to outside events hosted at UMaine.	Some leftover money from 2016 grant, can contact departments and other outlets on campus if we need resources.	Debate schedule not set currently and unclear if UMaine will be hosting any debates. Almost certainly there will be candidate visits with VIPs (but typically with very short notice).	Dependent on the event.

<b>Integrate voter registration info. and pitches into UMaine courses.</b>	Rob, Lauri, UMaine UVote Team, Hailey, all.	Early fall.	Would probably just need voter info. and reg. cards, an FaQ on student voter eligibility if we develop it, and volunteers willing to go make 5 minute pitches on voting.	None apparent.	Faculty, deans, department chairs, administrative specialists.
<b>Reach out to Greek Life and Inter-Fraternity Council.</b>	Rob, Lauri, others?	Late summer/early fall.	Making sure that the Greek organizations are aware of this effort.	None apparent.	Work through student orgs and IFC.
<b>Coordinate to enable voter activation student volunteer opportunities to count for digital badging learning pathways.</b>	Rob, Claire Sullivan, others?	ASAP & ongoing.	Would need to coordinate with those overseeing the Engaged Black Bear digital badging pathways.	Claire? Ideas here?	more info. from Claire?
<b>Voter registration pitches at larger student events (Kickin' Flicks, etc.)</b>	Lauri, Rob, Hailey, CASE.	Ongoing.	Would need to coordinate with those planning these events. Lauri had also suggested the UMaine UVote intern could develop materials for use here.	None apparent.	No major issues here--publicity and promotion for events already taken care of and events draw large numbers.

## Other ideas?

This document is a draft and members of this group should feel empowered to propose and pursue whatever strategies they would like to dedicate their time and energy to this election season. Some additional resources to help generate ideas.

[Campus Vote Project: Best Practices to Help Students Register and Vote](#)

[Institute for Democracy and Higher Education: Election Imperatives-Ten Recommendations to Increase College Student Voting and Improve Political Learning and Engagement in Democracy](#)