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2018 VOTER ENGAGEMENT ACTION PLAN October 31, 2018

For many years, UMBC has pursued approaches to civic learning and democratic engagement that foreground students' capacity as agents and co-creators of their communities and democracy. These approaches, aligned with the Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement Emergent Theory of Change (see apps.naspa.org/files/CLDE-Theory-of-Change.pdf), orient students to democracy as a way of life enacted both in formal political processes and in everyday settings: classrooms, student organizations, workplaces, and so on.

In the spirit of the recommendations in the National Task Force on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement's influential 2012 report *A Crucible Moment*, we have sought to support this learning and engagement in every corner of our institution, and across students' experiences in and beyond classrooms. Our Shriver Center has supported students' sustained engagement in Baltimore communities, helping them build meaningful connections with stakeholders addressing a variety of issues and challenges. Our BreakingGround initiative has seeded dozens of community projects and new courses across the curriculum that have afforded students opportunities to develop the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to contribute to a thriving democracy. In recent months we also launched a new Center for Democracy and Civic Life to support the infusion of civic learning and democratic engagement opportunities and democratic practices across our institution. The work of building and sustaining an ethos of deep engagement is a shared responsibility.

In this context, voter engagement means orienting students to the importance of informed participation in elections while challenging aspects of our broader U.S. civic culture that reduce citizenship to consumer participation and voting to a transaction. Our hope is to foster a sense of civic involvement as an everyday, lifelong commitment rather than episodic fulfillment of civic duties. As a result, we consider all of our engagement activities—including students' participation in service-learning, UMBC shared governance, and co-creation of the UMBC community through student organizations—as a part of our 2018 voter engagement strategy.

Here are some of the programs and activities we have undertaken, or will have undertaken by Election Day, that are specific to voter engagement in the 2018 election:

Set up a web page with election-related deadlines and links to all states' voter registration and absentee ballot information: www.umbc.edu/voterregistration.

Sent emails to all students with links to our voter information website and to the All-In Campus Democracy Challenge.

Conducted voter registration drives and encouraged students to take the All-In Campus Democracy Challenge's pledge to vote, including a drive on National Voter Registration Day in September. The UMBC Department of Political Science provided "I Pledged" stickers to give out to students taking the All-In Campus Democracy Challenge pledge.

Hosted a series of forums entitled *Between Elections: Coffee and Conversation*, each presented by our Student Government Association and designed to foster civil discussion around contentious issues. At each forum, expert panelists representing a variety of perspectives share information and thoughts about the issue being discussed, and participants break into facilitated table conversations to share and learn from each other.

Hosted Dinner With Friends: 10 simultaneous, facilitated dinner conversations addressing issues important to specific Maryland counties and the state as a whole. This event, hosted by the Student Government Association and the Center for Democracy and Civic Life along with campus partners, featured trained student facilitators leading discussions about development, transportation, and safety.

Hosted a forum for candidates for Baltimore County Executive, the executive position with responsibility for managing public services in the jurisdiction in which the UMBC campus is located.

Hosted a gubernatorial debate watch party.

Hosted a variety of roundtable discussions about issues at stake in the 2018 election and the voting process, including Knowledge Exchanges hosted by the Women's Center at UMBC and the Mosaic Center for Culture and Diversity's "What's the (I)ea?" series.

Provided free shuttle transportation to various counties' early voting centers to overcome one potential barrier to students' participation in the election.

Provided free Election Day transportation to the polling station that serves UMBC's residential communities.

Supported members of the faculty seeking to inform and engage students in connection with the 2018 election by providing resources and facilitation through the Center for Democracy and Civic Life.

Published and circulated an article on the Forbes platform through the All-In Campus Democracy Challenge encouraging students to vote despite recognizing that their single vote is unlikely to swing the election:
<https://www.forbes.com/sites/civiconation/2018/10/10/why-should-college-students--or-anyone-else--bother-voting/#2411ccc757da>

Hosted Election Night Extravaganza, a returns-watching party for the entire campus community featuring expert commentary from members of the faculty.