All In Democracy Challenge
Action Plan 2022

I.   INTRODUCTION

a. The University

The University of Maryland is a public research university located in College Park, Maryland. Founded in 1856, it serves as the flagship campus of the University System of Maryland and is the state's original land-grant institution, serving approximately 41,000 undergraduate and graduate students. In keeping with its mission, the University recognizes the importance of educating all undergraduate and graduate students to engage, interact, and work effectively in an increasingly diverse world.

b. Voting and Registration Rates

The university participates in the Tufts University National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) which measures voter registration and participation rates at over 750 colleges nationwide.

As this is a midterm election year, we are using our 2018 midterm election data to set goals. The percentage of UMD students registered to vote for the 2018 midterm elections increased from 2014 by 8.6% to 85.3%, and the voting rate of registered students increased as well by 28.8% to 52.8%.

Although the percentage of students registered to vote during the 2020 Presidential election decreased from the 2016 rate to 84.7% of all eligible students, the total number of registered students who voted in the election increased to 84.3%.

The data from the NSLVE report and other campus surveys indicates that there is a growing trend among our students away from in-person voting in favor of early and absentee voting. In the 2020 presidential election, 62% of University of Maryland students voted by mail-in ballot or other "not in person" method. The university aims to take advantage of this trend by encouraging students to plan ahead of time by (1) making a plan to vote, and (2) being aware of election deadlines in Maryland and in their home states, such as registration deadlines and absentee mail-in deadlines.

The University recognizes that innovation and advocacy are necessary to inspire social change and seeks to improve both registration and participation rates in the upcoming 2022 midterm election. Our goal for voting participation in 2022 is 54% of all UMD students, up from 46% in 2018.

c. Campus Climate

The CAWG survey of upperclassmen mentioned above provides further insights into our campus climate that aid in our efforts to create an effective action plan.

In the spring 2021 semester, 24% (884) of students in Professional Writing courses completed the "University of Maryland Student Survey." That semester, a series of questions were asked about the 2020 presidential election. Some key results are as follows:

- 95% of respondents agreed that "it is important for college students to vote"
- 79% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that "election misinformation undermines U.S. democracy"
- 44% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that "democracy in the U.S. is stable"
- 92% of students who voted believe it is their civic responsibility to vote
- 80% of students who voted felt that the results of the election would directly impact their lives
- 32% of students who voted agreed that there was a culture of voting at the university

d. TerpsVote Steering Committee

The university is currently participating in both the All In Democracy Challenge and the Big Ten Voter Registration Challenge. Both these efforts have been combined into one steering committee co-chaired by the TerpsVote Staff Co-Chair, Naomi Cohen, and Student Co-Chair, Scott Cronin. The committee is advised by Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs James McShay and Director of the Adele H. Stamp Student Union, Marsha Guenzler-Stevens. The steering committee is comprised of faculty, staff, and students as follows:

Naomi Cohen, Leadership and Community Service Learning (staff)
Scott Cronin, Student Government Association (student)
Dr. James McShay, Office of Vice President for Student Affairs (staff)
Dr. Marsha Guenzler-Stevens, Director, Stamp Student Union (staff)

Aiden Wechsler, Residence Hall Association (student)
Akhila Vishnubhotla, College Park Scholars (staff)
Alexis Jackson, Department of Fraternity and Sorority Life (staff)
Alispn Barlow, Stamp Student Union (staff)
Andrew Fellows, College of Information Studies, (faculty)
Aralia Ramirez, A. James Clark School of Engineering (staff)
Cameron Thurston, Office of Community Engagement (staff)
Courtney Holder, Office of Leadership and Community Service-Learning (staff)
Daniel Ostick, Department of Resident Life (staff)
Eleena Ghosh, MaryPIRG (student)
Ellie Geraghty, Alumni Association (staff)
Erik Van Johnson, College of Letters and Sciences (staff)
Golshan Jalali, Office of Community Engagement (staff)
Helen Wang, TerpsVote (student)
Joey Haavik, Graduate Student Government (student)
Kate Maloney, UMD Libraries (staff)
Korey Rothman, CIVICUS Living & Learning Community (staff)
Lizzie Irlbacher, Graduate Student Government (student)
Luke Kues, Department of Fraternity and Sorority Life (staff)
Lydia Nicholson, Office of Development and External Relations (staff)
Mike Hanmer, Center for American Politics and Citizenship (faculty)
Nicole Joie, Strategic Communications (staff)
Paul Brown, School of Public Policy (staff)
Paula Karamihas, UMD Athletics (staff)
Rebecca Riley, College of Computer, Mathematical and Natural Sciences (staff)
Renee Paulraj, TerpsVote (student)
Sam Novey, CIVIC Maryland Initiative (staff)
Tion Taylor, Department of Resident Life (staff)
Tori Shay, Student Orientation & Transition (staff)
Victor Mullins, Robert. H. Smith School of Business (staff)

II. PLANS FOR VOTER REGISTRATION AND ENGAGEMENT

a. Fall 2022 Initiatives
- Campus Engagement Initiatives
  - Add TerpsVote to a full-time staff member's position in the Office of Leadership and Community Service-Learning
  - Create and propose a budget to sustain TerpsVote initiatives
  - Hire four TerpsVote Student Ambassadors to represent the College of Computer, Math, and Natural Sciences, the Robert H. Smith School of Business, A. James Clark School of Engineering, and the UMD Graduate School, funds provided by the UMD Student Government Association
  - Collaborate with MaryPIRG and the New Voters Project to provide a training for interns, students assistants, ambassadors, and other interested participants about how to engage their peers in the voting process

- ○ Create and disseminate of a module for use in UNIV100 classes & other introductory courses that faculty can facilitate about how to register to vote & why student votes matter
- ● Communications Initiatives
  - ○ Website Platforms
    - ■ In addition to the link posted on TerpLink (UMD's primary events platform) and Testudo (Course registration platform) the link to UMD's TurboVote page will be posted on the following platforms that students frequently visit:
      - ● ELMS
      - ● ResLife
      - ● UMD's Financial Aid Website
  - ○ TerpsVote Website
    - ■ Update the TerpsVote website with a new design, information about the Maryland presidential primary and new Fall 2022 registration, early voting, and absentee deadlines for all 50 states
  - ○ Physical Marketing Materials
    - ■ Collaborate with the Residence Hall Association to strategically post flyers & posters in the residence halls with Voter Registration Information
    - ■ Create and disseminate a fact-sheet about the November 8 midterm election to inform student voters about deadlines, procedures, and resources
    - ■ Publish slides for use in digital signage across campus
  - ○ Communication with Faculty & Colleges
    - ■ Communicate with Faculty about reducing academic responsibilities during the election
    - ■ Request that voter registration information be included in the various specific newsletters for each college on campus
  - ○ Election Day Communication Strategy
    - ■ Publish updated early voter registration dates for all 50 states
    - ■ Communicate the importance of obtaining absentee ballots or early voters to students particularly out of state students
    - ■ Coordinate University-wide communication campaign
  - ○ Data distribution
    - ■ Distribute NSLVE report to senior campus leadership
- ● Voter Engagement Events Initiatives
  - ○ National Voter Registration Day events
    - ■ Social Media challenge with the Student Government Association
  - ○ MD Gubernatorial Debate Watch Party
    - ■ Inviting students to watch the Gubernatorial Debate to hear about plans for state policies from the candidates
    - ■ Information about voter registration & election reminders will be available
  - ○ Homecoming 2022
    - ■ The University of Maryland usually hosts various competitions in the week leading up to homecoming and during homecoming weekend. The TerpsVote Coalition is hoping to add a voter registration competition to the events with a prize for the student organization with the highest percentage of registered voters among its membership.

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    - ■ Tabling at the Homecoming Carnival & Voter Education Activities
    - ■ Information on the jumbotron during the Homecoming Football game
  - ○ Event tabling or virtual involvement at various fall semester campus-wide events, including,
    - ■ First Look Fair
    - ■ Free Fest (Resident Life)
    - ■ NextNow Fest
    - ■ College Park Scholars Block Party
    - ■ New Student Welcome
- ● Election Day - Get Out The Vote
  - ○ Fund the purchase of stamps and envelopes for absentee ballots to be handed out to students in the month leading up to the general election.
  - ○ Train students to go into classrooms, as requested by professors, and give short five to ten minute presentations about registering to vote and voting absentee in the three weeks leading up to the general election.
  - ○ Work with student organizations to fund and plan a Party at the Polls at at least one of our on-campus voting locations.
  - ○ Partner with the Department of Transportation Services to provide shuttles to the polling location closest to campus during the Early Voting period

b. **Spring 2022 Initiatives**
- ● Initiatives Completed
  - ○ Hired two new TerpsVote interns for the Summer and Fall 2022 semester, funds provided by the UMD Student Government Association.
  - ○ Promoted voter registration through TurboVote at various tabling events and virtually, through social media promotion and newsletter/listserv advertisement.
  - ○ Brought together a diverse group of students from across campus for focus groups about voting, focusing particularly on students from the fields of study who vote at the lowest rates, based on our NSLVE data
  - ○ Added a pop-up window on TerpLink with a link to register to vote & sign up for election reminders through TurboVote
  - ○ Participated in Big Ten Voter Challenge meetings
  - ○ Requested that the Registrar's Office redesign the student registration page to highlight "register to vote" and to develop a banner to be displayed close to the election
  - ○ Sent out campus-wide email targeted to students to encourage them to register to vote and participate in primary elections.
  - ○ Advertised and planned for the mail-in Maryland presidential primary election on July 19
    - ■ Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Maryland primary was moved to July 2022. In June, we began a social media campaign advertising the new date, how to register, and how to update mailing addresses to ensure reception of a ballot. Additional advertising for the primary was done via different newsletters and listservs in the various schools and departments on campus, including a campus-wide weekly newsletter prepared by our Vice President of Student Affairs.

III. VOTER EDUCATION

A. Promote civic and voter education related lectures and speakers through TerpsVote Coalition.
   a. Engage with Center for Democracy and Civic Engagement to lead a panel discussion about Student Voter Behavior in conjunction with the Gubernatorial Debate Watch Party
   b. Promote the Baha'i Chair for World Peace Annual Lecture
      i. Democracy, Voting Rights, and Black Women as the Vanguard - presented by Professor Martha S. Jones
B. Develop a curriculum module for the freshman UNIV100 course, which will allow all instructors to download the module and lead their class in discussions and activities regarding the 2022 midterm elections
   a. Discussions will include education about voter registration and absentee deadlines, information about whether it's best to register to vote in College Park or in a student's home state, and information about what policies, laws, and initiatives are enacted by the different levels of government on student's ballots in November.
   b. Activities will include an interactive quiz to gauge students' prior understanding of the voting process & elections and time for students to each make a plan to vote.
C. GVPT423: Elections and Electoral Behavior
   a. An examination of various topics relating to elections; the focus includes the legal structure under which elections are conducted, the selection and nomination process, the conduct of election campaigns, and patterns of political participation and voting choice in different types of elections.
D. Collaborate with Center for Democracy and Civic Engagement at the University of Maryland **https://cdce.umd.edu/** which educates, informs, and engages citizens and scholars in order to improve democratic governance.
E. Connect student voter registration to student employment - as students are hired on campus by large scale employers (RecWell, Stamp, Resident Life, Dining Services, C&VS) include voter registration opportunities in payroll paperwork.
F. Explore opportunities with the athletics department to promote voter registration, absentee voting, early voting, and voter education at athletic events.

IV. CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

The University of Maryland provides a rich array of learning experiences around civic engagement and leadership. However, without clearly defined expectations and a mission that assembles them into a coherent whole, our students may not graduate with a sense of empowerment as civically engaged leaders in their careers and communities.

We recognize that students come to college to prepare for lives of personal satisfaction and rewarding careers. They also seek to address society's problems by engaging in community based research, social values work, contributing to a culture of entrepreneurial good, and a commitment to community service and philanthropy. As one of the nation's top public research universities, the flagship of the University System of Maryland, and a land-grant institution, the University of Maryland must educate students that they can both do good and do well, each in his or her own unique ways.

It is the university's fundamental and compelling responsibility to prepare students for lives of wholeness and integrity. We must prepare students in all majors and career paths to be civically engaged citizens, scholars, and leaders.

The University of Maryland already excels in providing a rich array of educational experiences that address these areas. However, we must become more intentional about defining our desired learning outcomes in order for our students to understand the compelling nature and high level of our expectations of them—to become intentional learners. We must also establish a mission that assembles these outcomes into a coherent whole so that our students graduate with a sense of empowerment as civically engaged citizens, scholars, and leaders.

The TerpsVote Coalition will work with campus leaders to design a civic learning and democratic engagement plan building on the work of a task force report issued in 2004, the NSLVE data from 2020, and internal campus assessment of voting behaviors, to advance and guide the university in creating a model to advance civically engaged leadership while creating further opportunities for students to learn about and practice civic engagement and leadership. Suggested actions include:

a. Identify existing campus civic engagement initiatives and determine a larger campus collaborative to build on existing efforts – Do Good Campus, Democracy Then and Now, Campus Compact, Campus Fabric, among others to be determined
b. Establish campus-wide civic engagement coalition and ongoing steering committee to oversee efforts building on the All In Democracy Challenge.
c. Establish a campus-wide civic engagement vision and mission.
d. Identify existing civic engagement efforts on the campus and develop methods for promoting them to students.
e. Evaluate the development of learning outcomes to be used with civic engagement strategies.
f. Share NSLVE data from the midterm elections with campus leadership - the Vice President of Student Affairs, and the Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs and Provost.
g. The TerpsVote Coalition - comprised of various stakeholders on campus - will meet to discuss data from the NSLVE report and how to distribute the results on campus & publicly.

The university is currently engaged in the following partnerships:
● Transform - Mid-Atlantic
● National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement
● Big Ten Voter Challenge
● All In Democracy Challenge
● Higher Education Presidents' Commitment to Full Student Voter Participation
● Students Learn Students Vote
● TurboVote
● Center for Democracy and Civic Engagement
● Student Government Association
● Graduate Student Government
● Maryland Civic Education Coalition

- University System of Maryland Voting Initiative
- City of College Park
- Prince George's County Board of Elections

V.   ASSESSMENT

a. The TerpsVote Coalition steering committee will evaluate data from the NSLVE to determine the degree to which we have been successful in achieving our goals of increasing voter turnout and increasing the number of students registered to vote.
b. Data reported through TurboVote will be analyzed to assess voter registration efforts.
    i. Set up custom links for events, Testudo, ELMS, and ResLife to track their effectiveness in driving students to the TurboVote site.
c. The TerpsVote Coalition will again engage the Campus Assessment Working Group (CAWG) to survey upperclassmen about the campus climate surrounding voting and voter registration on campus.
d. Conduct focus groups in Spring 2023 based on NSLVE data
e. Contact City of College Park for data on the Primary Elections in July 2022