



Democratic Engagement Action Plan

2024-2025

Executive Summary

This nonpartisan democratic engagement action plan was developed by University of Minnesota Duluth in Minnesota for the 2024 election. Our campus is a traditional college campus providing primarily in-person education for undergraduate and graduate students. The purpose of this action plan is to increase nonpartisan democratic engagement and student voter registration, education, and turnout in the 2024 presidential election. The efforts outlined in this plan began in the Spring 2024 semester as part of the Minnesota Primary Election and will extend into November 2024 and the General / Presidential Election.

This plan was developed in consultation with the members of our campus Get Out The Vote coalition. Membership includes representatives from our divisions of Academic Affairs, Student Life (Student Affairs), from Student Organizations, and from Community Partners. Our efforts are supported by our campus leadership and are in compliance with all state requirements in Minnesota. Continued planning and execution of this plan will be coordinated by the GOTV Coalition, lead by Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Life, Jeremy Leiferman.

Through our planning efforts this year, we realized that our approaches might be not reaching all members of our campus community. We have set a goal to increase our efforts in reaching out to student organizations in our Multicultural Center community. Additionally, we are excited to be welcoming a staff member from our Office of Diversity & Inclusion to the GOTV Coalition!

Evaluation of our efforts will occur throughout the election cycle so that we are able to adjust our efforts as needed. The GOTV Coalition will complete a thorough evaluation of all our efforts at the conclusion of the election cycle to help inform our plans for future years.

Leadership

The work of our Get Out The Vote (GOTV) Coalition is supported by our campus leadership, including our Interim Chancellor (David McMillan) and our Vice Chancellor for Student Life (Dr. Lisa A. Erwin).

The GOTV Coalition consists of the following staff members:

- Jeremy Leiferman, Associate Vice Chancellor, Student Life (convener)
- Robyn Bauer, Housing Services & Communications Coordinator, Housing & Residence Life
- Jeni Eltink, Director, Kirby Student Center
- Cheryl Skafte, Public Engagement Coordinator, Academic Affairs
- Carmen Watson, Coordinator, Office of Diversity & Inclusion

Additionally, the GOTV Coalition includes student representatives from the following student organizations:

- SEE Change
- Student Government Association
- Bulldog Republicans (not active 2023-2024)
- College Democrats (not active 2023-2024)
- Political Science Association

Finally, the GOTV Coalition consults with a number of community-based entities to support our efforts:

- City of Duluth Clerk's Office (supporting early voting campaigns)
- St. Louis County Auditor (we have an agreement to share student lists prior to elections to aid in registration / proof of residency)
- League of Women Voters (supporting voter registration and voter education campaigns)

Our Coalition meets approximately once per month during the fall & spring semesters. These meetings are convened by the Associate Vice Chancellor for Student Life and provide an opportunity for the group to set goals, review reports, brainstorm ideas, and plan for events and initiatives.

Succession Planning: The responsibility for convening the GOTV Coalition is included in the Associate Vice Chancellor, Student Life position description. Additionally, the State of Minnesota requires our campus to designate a Campus Voting Coordinator - that responsibility has also been dictated to the AVC, Student Life. A number of the student organizations noted above have been involved in our coalition over a number of years. Student Government Association includes involvement in the coalition as an expectation for an executive position, ensuring their involvement.

The Office of Diversity & Inclusion's involvement in our Coalition is new and creates an opportunity to deepen our outreach towards more members of our campus community, including students connected to that office's work or involved in student organizations that are supported by the office's work. This is an area that has been noted as an opportunity and our goals noted later in this plan are reflective of that.

The inclusion of a representative from the Public Engagement office creates an opportunity for us to build and strengthen our intersections with academic units on-campus and deepen the inclusion of topics related to voter education and engagement into the curriculum. This is another area that has been noted as an opportunity and our goals noted later in this plan are reflective of that.

Commitment

UMD's efforts in voter education contribute to Goal 5 of [UMD's Strategic Plan](#):

Advance UMD's profile as an intentional and pivotal partner for Duluth, the Northland, and Minnesota.

Additionally, our efforts are supportive of [UMD's Student Learning Outcome #8](#):

Contribute to local, national, and global communities in which they live.

UMD also recently received the Carnegie Community Engagement designation, which recognizes our efforts in increasing voter registration, voter education, and student voting. This designation also included the creation of a Public Engagement office on-campus. Staff from that office are a key participant in our GOTV Coalition efforts.

UMD has joined the All In Democracy Challenge in 2016 and submitted an Action Plan for most of the cycles since then. We were recognized as a "Bronze Campus" for 2016 and a "Gold Campus" for 2018 & 2020. This progression suggests that we are realizing success through our planning efforts and the work of our GOTV Coalition. Additionally, the University of Minnesota Duluth has been a signatory to the Higher Education Presidents' Commitment to Full Student Voter Participation since 2020.

UMD has also recently joined the Ask Every Student initiative. We also applied and received a grant from AES and will be using those funds to further our efforts around voter registration and engagement.

Finally, in the 2023 legislative session, the State of Minnesota passed a new law related to College & University engagement with voter registration and elections. While UMD was already doing many of the things now required by this law, we have adopted additional measures to ensure full compliance with these updated laws.

Landscape

The University of Minnesota Duluth is a public, 4-year institution. UMD joined the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge in 2016.

Our fall 2023 campus enrollment and demographic characteristics are listed below.

- Enrollment: 9,350
- Student Characteristics:
 - Degree:
 - Undergraduate: 80.0% (7,475)
 - Graduate: 6.0% (564)
 - Professional: 2.5% (237)

- Non-degree: 11.5% (1,074)
- New students:
 - New freshman: 19.5% (1,821)
 - New transfers: 3.1% (291)
- Home residence:
 - In state: 85.0% (7,943)
 - Out of state: 15.0% (1,407)
- Race/ethnicity:
 - BIPOC: 12.8% (1,201)
 - International: 1.7% (157)
 - White: 73.9% (6,907)
 - Unknown: 11.6% (1,085)
- Legal sex:
 - Female: 50.5% (4,719)
 - Male: 49.2% (4,597)
 - Unknown: 0.3% (34)

The state of Minnesota has ranked 1st amongst all states for voter turnout during presidential elections in the past 3 elections. This suggests that many of our students come from communities and environments that already value democratic engagement. This helps us focus our message in some ways to where students are already at.

Goals

Our GOTV Coalition has established the following short- and long-term goals for our work:

Short Term Goals

- For the 2024 General Election, we have set the following goals around voter engagement:
 - Voter Registration Rate: 92%
 - Voting Rate of Registered Students: 90%
 - Voting Rate: 85%
- During the 2024-2025 academic year, our GOTV Coalition will meet, at minimum, monthly.
- Hire 1-2 student workers to focus on voter engagement during the Fall 2024 semester.
- Pursue and receive a grant through the "Ask Every Student" initiative

Long Term Goals

- Increase relationships between the GOTV Coalition and members of the Multicultural Center student organizations around voter engagement.
- Build relationships between the GOTV Coalition and the Political Science & Journalism academic departments.

- Integrate voter engagement and civic participation in the first-year seminar course.
- Engage in conversations around voter engagement topics that can be included in the curriculum.
- Do further research into the campus-level data that we have available that may provide further insight into our students to help us form further strategies for engagement.

Strategy

Initiatives

The GOTV Coalition is pursuing the following initiatives as part of our efforts around voter engagement and education:

- Ask Every Student Initiative
 - Through the "Ask Every Student" model, we are planning to provide modules and class presentations for faculty members to incorporate into the courses. We are particularly targeting First Year Seminar courses as new students are taking this course in the fall semester.
 - Additionally, we will coordinate a voter pledge card that will be available at all of our events for Fall 2024 that will help us track our efforts.
- Reduce the Rancor, Minnesota
 - This statewide campaign aims to reduce hostile polarization in public life. Championed by the state chairs of the two main political parties, the campaign is a partnership with Braver Angels and about 25 organizations of elected officials, interested citizens, colleges and universities, civic, religious and business leaders, and other nonprofits.
 - We are planning to promote the campaign and offer depolarizing activities through integration in our events (see below) for faculty, staff, students and community members.

Events

The following efforts and events occurred during the Spring 2024 semester connected to the Primary Election::

- All Student Email
 - An email to all students to remind them about voter registration deadlines and voting options for the Minnesota Primary Election in March.
- UMD Votes Day
 - Given that the Minnesota Primary Election occurred during our Spring Break week, we designated February 27, 2024 (the Tuesday before the Primary Election) as UMD Votes Day
 - We provided a voter information station in the Kirby Student Center to educate students about voting options, same day registration, and polling location.

- We provide a party bus to transport students to the Duluth City Hall, our early voting location for our community
- This event was sponsored by UMD Engage (Public Engagement), Kirby Student Center, Student Government Association, and Student Life.

The GOTV Coalition & our Partners are planning the following events as part of the Fall 2024 Election Cycle:

- Constitution Day & National Voter Registration Day - 9/17 (Kirby)
 - Tabling in Kirby Student Center to educate students on constitutional rights and to encourage voter registration
- National Voter Education Week - 10/7 - 10/11
 - Social Media Campaign this week around Voter Registration
 - All student email from Student Life devoted to Voter Registration
- Voter-Palooza - 10/7 (SGA)
 - A resource fair with tables from a variety of partners and members of the GOTV Coalition to encourage voter registration and education.
 - Invited Campus & Community Partners:
 - College Democrats
 - Bulldog Republicans
 - SEE Change
 - League of Women Voters
 - Take Action
 - Lead Minnesota
 - City of Duluth
 - Reduce the Rancor Minnesota / Braver Angels
- Vote Early Day - 10/29
 - Social Media Campaign around early voting options for students
- Mock Election - Early November (date TBD)
 - A campus mock election to encourage students to become familiar with the candidates and ballot initiatives prior to the election
 - Hosted by Political Science Association
- Election Day - 11/5
 - Social media reminder posts
 - Voter Support Center hosted in Kirby Student Center to assist students with voting related questions, such as same day registration, polling locations, etc.
 - Poll site in Kirby Student Center for on-campus residents

NSLVE

Our voter registration and voting rates from NSLVE are listed below for the 3 cycles we have data available for.

- Voter Registration Rate:
 - 2016: 81.5%

- 2018: 79.6%
 - 2020: 89.7%
- Voting Rate of Registered Students:
 - 2016: 84.8%
 - 2018: 67.2%
 - 2020: 87.9%
- Voting Rate:
 - 2016: 69.1%
 - 2018: 53.5%
 - 2020: 78.9%

Our NSLVE report does not include demographic information on our students and so we are unable through this data how our voting rates are reflected by the various identities represented on our campus.

The data from our NSLVE report, particularly the 2020 data, was reviewed by our GOTV Coalition and has helped inform our specific goals around voter registration and voting rates. We used the 2020 data, as that was a presidential election year which has different voter turnout rates historically than the opposite election cycle years.

Our 2022 NSLVE data has not yet been released, and was therefore not reviewed at the time this plan was written (May 2024).

Reporting

The details included in this action plan have been developed and reviewed by our GOTV Coalition. Our final action plan will be shared on our Voter Information webpage. Additionally, this webpage will provide links to prior year plans and our NSLV reports already posted through the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge website.

Evaluation

Our GOTV Coalition will evaluate the effectiveness of our efforts and the achievement of our goals using the following data and assessments:

- Voter turn-out data at our on-campus polling location
- Voter Registration pledge completion
- NSLVE Data
- Event attendance & participation
- Social media post reach & engagement
- Classroom presentation participation
- Course module adoption & usage
- Feedback received from campus & community partners

- GOTV Coalition member engagement & participation

Our evaluation efforts will occur in an on-going fashion throughout the fall semester, allowing us to shift our approaches as necessary in order to reach the largest number of students possible.

Our evaluation efforts will be summarized in a report after the election to document our efforts and effectiveness. This will allow our efforts to be noted so that they can then be considered for future action planning cycles.