



## All In Campus Democracy Challenge 2020 Action Plan

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*Update report prepared by External Relations (5/29/2020)*

### **Executive Summary**

The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (UWM) has a long history of student, faculty and staff involvement in civic and community engagement. Our [Guiding Values](#) and Institutional Vision prominently feature community engagement, reflecting their deeply rooted role in the actions and environment of UWM. Our students, faculty and staff are involved in a wide range of civic engagement projects at international, national, state and local levels, while maintaining partnerships with a large number of Milwaukee-area community organizations.

The goal of this action plan is to provide a template for student voter engagement and outreach. Guided by the student voting work group, tasks throughout will be assigned to committee members with the goal of increasing voter turnout so that eligible voters know how to register, find their polling location or absentee ballot and ultimately vote. This is a non-partisan initiative. The majority of work in this action plan takes place January – November.

### **Chancellor's Commitment**

UWM continues to deepen its positive impact in the city and region through community and business partnerships. Through this work, UWM boasts a strong and long-established track record of pervasive community partnerships, community-driven research, educational and research collaborations, student experiential learning opportunities, contributions to economic development, and enhancements to cultural and environmental quality-of-life.

UWM is proud to have been recognized among the nation's top universities for community engagement by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. The foundation created its [Community Engagement Classification](#) to recognize colleges and universities that benefit their communities in ways not reflected by the national educational data typically used to compile lists of top colleges.

Chancellor Mone has signed on for the [Higher Education Presidents' Commitment to Full Student Voter participation](#). The Presidential Commitment ensures our responsibility to prepare students to become responsible and engaged participants in our democracy and that includes, most importantly, to exercise the right and duty to register and to vote. This commitment has been discussed at the UW System level across several Chancellors and is mentioned in Chancellor messaging to campus and external stakeholders as appropriate.

## **2020 Elections**

Spring Primary – Tuesday, February 18, 2020

Spring Election – Tuesday, April 7, 2020

Fall Primary – Tuesday, August 11, 2020

Fall General Election – Tuesday, November 3, 2020



## **UWM's Action Team**

Our multidisciplinary team includes representatives from around campus with the goal of raising civic engagement across campus. Members are selected by members of the Chancellor's Cabinet or nominated through appropriate governance procedures and the group is co-chaired by the Vice Chancellor for University Relations and Communications and the Chief Student Affairs Officer. The Director of External Relations is the project manager for campus voting initiatives. The committee meets monthly and includes students, faculty and staff from across campus. This is a working group, so all representatives assist with implementation of tactics and strategies, review of data and the evaluation of success of the action plan.

The committee will continue to work to add additional stakeholders from diverse and marginalized communities. The student life and multicultural centers are working to identify additional students and staff as stakeholders. We know from national data that marginalized and underrepresented people vote at lower rates, so we are intentional working to increase voters from those areas of our campus population. Many of those students are commuters so it is more difficult to engage with them on-campus. However, many are connected to the student life and multicultural centers so we hope this strategy will increase voter registration and participation.

Recently we have been working to establish a succession plan for students. Our Student Association is elected each year and student employees change, but the spaces on the committee remain for them. New representatives are added each year as we identify new areas where we can improve. One example is adding a representative from our Study Abroad Office after we identified we could improve voting rates of our students studying abroad. We actively recruit new members when someone leaves the committee.

Representatives include:

- Executive Sponsors and Co-Chairs: Vice Chancellor for University Relations Tom Luljak and Chief Student Affairs Officer Kelly Haag
- Campus Voting Project Manager – Director of External Relations, Keri Duce
- Registrar, Kristin Hildebrand
- Director, Center for Student Involvement, Eric Jessup-Anger
- Student Association Professional Staff, Quincy Kissack
- Dean of Students Office Representative, Domonique Smith
- Director of Facilities Peck School of the Arts, Randall Trumbull-Holper
- Integrated Marketing & Communications Team – Mark Jacobson, Tina Keller, Erika Kramer, Lesley Kelling, Kathy Quirk, John Schumacher and Michelle Johnson

- University Housing Representative - Matt Mountin
- UWMPD Chief Joseph LeMire
- Student Union Representatives - Mike Schmit, Brandon James, Amanda Elliott
- Panther Card Office/Student Voter ID – Richard Haskey
- Executive Director Center for Community-Based Learning, Leadership & Research Laurie Marks
- Director of New Student Programs – Colin Daly
- Student Life and Multicultural Student Centers representatives – to be named
- Director of Study Abroad and Center for International Education - Sharon Gosz
- Assistant Dean for Student Affairs (Waukesha/Washington Co.) - Courtney O’Connell
- Student Life & Events Coordinator (Waukesha/Washington Co. Campus) - Tima Guled
- Senior Student Life Coordinator (Waukesha/Washington Co. Campus) - Susan Kalinka
- Student rep – Connor Mathias Student Association rep
- Faculty rep – Associate Professor Paru Shah (Political Science)

### **Community Partners**

Ongoing partners include the City of Milwaukee Election Commission, Panther Advocates Alumni Group, Panther Promoters Legislative Group, and the League of Women Voters. New partners this year include the Andrew Goodman Foundation, the Campus Vote Project, Public Interest Network, All Voting is Local, the WI ACLU and WISPIRG.

### **Early Voting Site**

UW-Milwaukee has again been selected as an early voting site for the 2020 general election. Planning for a high-traffic location is in progress and we await word from the Wisconsin Election Commission.

Our 2018 NSLVE data showcased an increase of 9.6% in absentee voting. Some of this is likely due to the on-campus early voting site. We’ll need to increase this number due to COVID-19 and have begun brainstorming ideas with the work group.

UW-Milwaukee was [one of eight in-person absentee “early” voting sites in the City of Milwaukee for the 2018 general election](#). Of the 2,633 early voters at UWM’s site, 112 were Sandburg Hall residents. Sandburg Hall, located in ward 130, had 902 polling place voters on Election Day. 856 of them resided at Sandburg Hall and 782 were same day registrations.

### **Campus Voting Location**

- The Sandburg Hall Polling Location (residence hall with 4000 people) has been closed due to COVID-19. We are unsure if it will be open for the Fall 2020 elections. If it is open, we can track voter registration, participation and outreach for that location.

### **Course related considerations**

- Dr. Paru Shah's Political Science 150 (service-learning course)

- Information will be sent to all faculty via the Provost Announcements with suggestions on how to weave voter registration and voting into the curriculum in discussions around civic engagement.
- We will utilize the Field of Study data from our NSLVE report to target majors with lower than average voting rates in hopes of increasing them to at least our average rate. On good example is working with the School of Architecture and Urban Planning where there is high engagement with their faculty.

### **Possible 2020 Events**

We await word on how COVID-19 will impact on-campus events. Some events could be successful virtually. Voting information is available in our Virtual Student Union.

- Campus Election Engagement Project Fellow working on GOTV efforts (CBLLR)
- Constitution Day on September 17 (Letters and Sciences)
- Political rallies and visits as requested by groups (Campus Facilities and Event Planners)
- Townhall and debate events and watch parties (Campus Facilities and Event Planners)
- Civic Responsibility speaker series (Global Inclusion and Engagement)

### **DNC 2020 Convention Planning and Engagement**

Milwaukee is excited to welcome the 2020 Democratic National Convention to our world-class city August 17-20. A campus working group has convened to address space requests, courses offered, service learning, volunteer opportunities, programming, promotional/marketing opportunities, media/experts, staffing and internship needs. ([uwm.edu/DNC2020](http://uwm.edu/DNC2020))

### **Marketing and Communication Deliverables**

- Key election dates are on the campus events calendar.
- Marketing materials across campus will be refreshed and given a similar look and feel, while also being reviewed for consistency and clarity of message.
  - Posters, banner and printed marketing is focused in the Student Union and University Housing. Digital signage will be utilized around campus.
  - Initial marketing is included in Orientation presentations. We are hopeful this will help engage more first-year students and improve their voting rates.
- Most information is housed at [uwm.edu/vote](http://uwm.edu/vote), a one-stop website for students with information on registration, voting locations, voter ID and more. This site also includes information on how students can access a customized voter enrollment verification letter. Our Action Plan and NSLVE data are also available on this site. All campus voting communication direct people to this website.
- The social media plan is coordinated through University Relations and Communication, focusing on proactive messaging and response to issues. That information is also shared with other campus social and digital marketers to share.
- Campus-wide email(s) are sent to students, faculty and staff. It includes the UW System Guidance on Political Campaign Activities guidelines. (September/October 2020)
- Families receive information through the Panther Family Association to assist their students in identifying how to register, where to vote or how to obtain a ballot.

## 2014 & 2018 Campus Report: Student Voting Rates for UWM

- Absentee voting increased in 2018 while in-person election day voting decreased. This was likely caused by the new early voting location on campus.
- Voting by 18-21-year old's continued to be the lowest percentage at 46.1%. This is the highest number of people enrolled at UWM at 10,649. A greater focus on increasing voter turnout of this age group is critical.
- First year students voted at a rate of 45.8%, sophomores at 47.9% and upper level at 51.1%. Graduate students voted at a 56.6% rate and undergraduates at a 49.2% rate.
- Full-time students voted at a rate of 48.9% and part-time students at 60.3%.

## National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement

### *Milwaukee Campus*

- The percentage of total students voting rose 16.4 percent.
- In spite of extensive early vote campaigns, and a convenient early vote location, in-person election day voting still accounted for 75 percent of all student votes.
- The biggest area of growth continues to be the youngest demographic – 18-21-year-olds who may be voting for the first time (will be voting for President for the first time in 2020).

### *Washington County*

- Enrollment declined 26.6 percent from 2014 to 2018 but the total number of students voting only declined by 14.6 percent.
- Nearly all students do in-person voting – a unique challenge for on-campus promotion as most cannot vote on campus (have only their home address).
- Opportunity to promote early voting (if it exists in various communities) as almost no students take advantage. It is likely available in a few larger communities in the county.

### *Waukesha*

- Enrollment declined 25.4 percent from 2014 to 2018 but total student voting only declined 4.8 percent.
- In-person voting remains the nearly exclusive way votes are cast. Similar to the case at Washington County, perhaps there are some marketing ideas for on campus providing info on voting locations just for the few days before election day.
- Early voting would be a growth area though – larger communities within this student body group (Waukesha, Brookfield, Menomonee Falls) could provide realistic opportunities for promoting this.

## Recommendations For Fall 2020 Election

- Increase marketing efforts on Waukesha and Washington Co. campuses past student email. Get up signage to encourage registration and absentee voting. Make sure tabling for voter registration is coordinated if allowed under COVID restrictions.
- A series of videos are being created to help with student engagement and understanding of the registration and voting process.

- Print and place Grind Coffee Shop stickers about the [uwm.edu/vote](http://uwm.edu/vote) website.
- Encourage students to register to vote during Orientation and Move-in. If allowed, the League of Women voters will help us register students during move-in.
- Maintain a voting link in Student News & Stuff September-November encouraging registration and absentee voting.
- Proactively ask students in the PantherCard office if they need a free voter ID and create a quarter sheet with ID information.
- Register athletes, housing floors, service learners, etc. to vote as large groups when programming is available from League of Women Voters, etc.
- Add voting to the UWM Bucket List and other campus-wide promotions

### **Short Term Goals**

- To increase student voting rates by at least 10 percent for each group (first-year, sophomore and upper-level) from 2018 to 2020.
- To strive for full voter participation which starts with a goal of full voter registration.
- To provide additional opportunities for students to register to vote prior to election day as available with COVID restrictions.
- To actively promote the City of Milwaukee early voting site on campus if available.
- To target marketing on all three campus locations to ensure outreach around voter registration and participation to all students.

### **Long Term Goals**

- Build more curriculum and faculty engagement opportunities in tandem with the Provosts Office.
- To provide opportunities to register to vote during Orientation and Move-in.
- To strive for full voter participation which starts with a goal of full voter registration.

### **Reporting**

- Our NSLVE reports and All In Challenge plan are shared internally and externally at [uwm.edu/vote](http://uwm.edu/vote), via social media and email.
- We issue media releases as appropriate – early voting site, All In Challenge awards, etc.

### **Evaluation**

- Each meeting the work group discuss how we can move towards the goal of full voter registration and participation utilizing our Action Plan framework (reviewing deliverables, discussing strategies, reviewing data, etc.). Implementation is monitored by the Project Manager.
- Success of email marketing is gauged through our content management system (email open rates, etc.).
- We receive voting data from the City of Milwaukee for our early voting site and campus voting site to evaluate post-election.
- If we have the ability to host on-campus events we will track participation in those events.