

## **Final Report**

**Institution:** Washtenaw Community College

**Coalition Members:**

- Alysha Rosetto - WCC Student
- Bryce Robertson - WCC Student
- Peter Leshkevich - WCC Staff

### **Overview**

The Winter 2020 Semester is just the start to Washtenaw Community Colleges efforts to increase voter registration along with voter education throughout the entire 2020 election year. With local Primary elections occurring on March 10, 2020, the coalition set out to have a week long effort to encourage students to register and learn as much as they can about the upcoming elections.

In February, during the week of Presidents Day, the coalition along with the WCC Student Development and Activities and the League of Women Voters hosted multiple registration tables, a primary party, classroom visits and an ice-cream social. Through our various activities we set our goals to reach out to 725 students and after all was said and done we talked to over 1000 potential voters.

### **Coalition**

This semester our coalition was scaled back by a couple of people which is one reason why we focused on a “less is more” project plan. The Winter of 2020 coalition consisted of Peter Leshkevich, Alysha Rosetta, Bryce Robertson, and The League of Women Voters. Each of us had our own tasks and took initiative when it came to planning and implementing.

In the past the Democracy Fellows held registration tables throughout the semester but with last semester's success from the League of Women Voters we let them take that initiative on. Not only did they focus on registering new voters they also helped register students and faculty for absentee ballots. Their efforts allowed Peter, Alysha, and Bryce to focus on other civic engagement events to promote voter turnout for the March Primary Election.

Peter advised on the initiatives run by Bryce and Alysha and implemented other programs that would not only help in the success of this semester but the upcoming Fall Semester as well. The CVP team, due to the assistance from the League of Women Voters, was able to put our efforts into engagement and educational opportunities. We organized and successfully conducted 4 events that took place from February 17-20, 2020. Even though our coalition was smaller than previous semesters our efforts were not.

### Action Plan Analysis

With the year 2020 having several elections spread throughout the several months we wanted to ensure that our efforts led to a strong voter turnout at every possible election. Therefore we set out to not only register those eligible, but to educate, engage and supply them with the information and tools necessary in order to participate in these civic duties.

Initiative Name	Proposed Budget	Goal: Students Reached	Goal: Registered	Results: Students Reached	Results: Registered	Measured	Responsible Party
League of Women Voter Visits (8 Days)	0	250	250	334	182	Paper/Turbo Vote	LOWV
2020 by 2020 - Classroom Registration Contest	500	250	250	400	24	TurboVote	PL/BR
Primary Party	250	75	25	69		TurboVote	AR
TurboVote Classroom Visit Day	150	75	50	15		TurboVote	BR
President Day Table	150	75	40	75		TurboVote	AR
Ice Cream Registration Drive	600	250	100	200		TurboVote	BR
TurboVote Registration from Orientation	0	1000	300	1000+	147	TurboVote	PL

#### Voter Registration

Considering most of registration success on campus came from the League of Women Voters last semester we solicited them again to help out for the Winter of 2020. The coalition scheduled for them to set up registration stations on campus for two weeks starting February 10th and ending on February 21. This timeline was set in order to allow voters to register online in a timely manner, before online registration closed. Through this effort they were not only able to assist in registration but helped voters obtain absentee ballots as well. Due to previous success we set our sites on assisting

250 eligible voters. They not only met that goal but exceeded it by reaching 334 eligible voters and by assisting 182 of them get registered along with helping 152 acquire absentee ballots. Alongside their efforts Peter organized an initiative called 2020 by 2020, this program was designed to increase our Turbovote registrations to 2,020 by the time the November 2020 election arrived. With the help of Bryce, they reached out to faculty to help implement this program with the incentive of whichever class had the most registrations by the end of the semester would receive a pizza party. We utilized TurboVote to capture our overall data, we were able to give each instructor and class a unique id in order to track the winners. When we wrapped up the winter contest we had a total of 24 newly registered individuals. These two projects were our largest registration efforts but we also made sure we had registration booths available at our other events as well. When we finally wrapped things up we had 171 request registration assistance through TurboVote, along with the 182 paper registrations from the League of Women Voters we had 353 newly registered voters on campus.

### Voter Education and Engagement

Being a registered voter is only a fraction of civic engagement, the WCC coalition set out to educate those eligible on what to expect on the ballot come the March Primary Election. We held 3 events to educate and engage potential voters in order to excite voter turnout. Alysha was tasked with hosting a Primary Party where her goal was to reach 75 students and educate them on the upcoming Primary Party along with other information in regards to the U.S. elections. She was able to host two parties with approximately 69 students in total attendance. The same day she held her event, Bryce along with assistance from the entire Student Development and Activities department, hosted an Ice Cream Social where we passed out complete ballot information for Washtenaw County so that those eligible could become informed on what to expect come March 10th. This program reached over 200 students based on the number of bowls we gave out. In the same efforts Bryce coordinated and implemented a classroom visit in front of 15 students to inform them about Turbovote and how it can help them stay engaged not only for the Primary Election but for any other election that might take place in their precinct in the future. The 2020 by 2020 initiative is designed to increase registration through Turbovote but it also introduces people to the other engagement platforms turbovote offers. Based on the idea that most of our classes host approximately 25 students and we had 16 classes signed up, the total engagement from

this program was over 400 students. Through these five initiatives along with the efforts from the league of Women Voters we were able to engage with over 1000 students and other potential voters on campus and in our community.

### **Successes**

The Winter 2020 coalition set out to focus on civic engagement through registration efforts along with educational initiatives. We wanted less projects but wanted them to be larger in scale. All in all we vastly exceeded our projections thanks to the League of Women Voters and the support of our faculty for participating in the 2020 by 2020 program, having their class attend the Primary Party, and allowing us to come into their class and speak about TurboVote.

As an institution that continually strives and succeeds in being a leader when it comes to civic engagement and being a voter friendly campus, we wanted to ensure we had momentum leading up to the 2020 Presidential Election. Last semester we ran into having too many projects and not enough time. So we decided to scale our number of projects and initiatives back but wanted to focus more on engagement. By taking this approach we were able to engage over 1000 students and members of our community to excite them about all the upcoming elections this year. This led to a successful semester by ensuring that we were able to complete every event in a timely manner and did not have to scrap any project in order to complete another.

The biggest success is the support the coalition continues to receive from the League of Women Voters along with the faculty and Student Development and Activities department at Washtenaw Community College. Without any of their support we would not have near the success and ultimately we would not be creating a voter friendly campus.

### **Barriers**

The Winter 2020 initiatives were set in place in order to overcome our previous barriers and to ensure we did not spread ourselves too thin with many small tasks as we felt we had done in previous semesters. We set out to have less projects but make them bigger.. Our efforts did see some improvements from the Fall 2019 semester but we still came across some barriers that we had to adapt and overcome.

Our four main projects were a donut and coffee registration table, classroom visits, ice cream social, and a primary election informational party. By having only these four projects we wanted to ensure they were completed and gave students and faculty proper time to register ahead of the March 10 primary in accordance with the Michigan registration laws. We scheduled all our events for the same week in February in order to

allow students and faculty an opportunity to register online in time for the election. This idea was set forth in December just before the break which gave us plenty of time to get things planned out but as we approached the date our programs we ran into some logistical issues with other programs going on. This meant we had to reschedule a few initiatives and ended up hosting two in one day. We managed to set up the programs close enough in proximity as to have some overflow. The only issue with that is it might have skewed our numbers. The other issue is with having two programs on the same day another initiative was pushed out a few weeks and did not afford us the opportunity to register students at the campus for the March Primary but we were able to still talk to students about the upcoming election and why the Primary Election is still important.

Another barrier we are now facing is not something we could have ever predicted but is worth noting. Due to the recent pandemic of COVID-19 we have had to move our campus to online, this limits our face to face opportunities along with interrupting our meetings to discuss how to prepare for the next semesters initiatives. Our 2020 by 2020 challenge, was in efforts to increase registration amongst our students and their families. This program has been halted by the fact that we have had to focus on moving everything online and we are now approaching our deadline for this challenge.

The true measure of our success moving forward will not be in our outcomes for this semester but in how we adapt and overcome in the coming years. Some things will be much easier to revise and work with whereas others may be a continual struggle.

### **What's Next**

Moving into the Fall 2020 semester we will have a completely new coalition as Bryce and Alysha are moving on. However, we have laid out a blueprint for success and they will still be able to utilize Peter Leshkivich and the League of Women Voters to continue to engage students and staff at Washtenaw Community College.

The COVID-19 outbreak did cause some issues but it has also allowed us an opportunity to look at how we can expand our services and create a voter friendly campus without being on campus. The 2020 by 2020 program was initially designed to be a face to face initiative encouraging faculty and students to engage with others in the community to promote civic engagement. With current orders that allows us an opportunity to shift our focus to having some online features in the coming semesters that will round out the year 2020.

Once the new Democracy Fellows are assigned they will have a meeting to discuss the Campus Vote Project and decide on their own platforms and initiatives they would like to implement. Being able to follow in the footsteps of other successful

coalitions this new CVP team will find a path to success and continue to be a leader in civic engagement on college campuses.