



Western Michigan University
All In Challenge Action Plan
We Vote
December 2019, Updated September 2020

Executive Summary

Western Michigan University, through WeVote, a group consisting of students, faculty, and staff, is committing to fostering democratic engagement for all students at Western Michigan University. This plan was developed by the 2019 Executive Committee of WeVote through adapting the existing strategic plan adopted in Summer 2019 by WeVote. Faculty and staff have been working on promoting democratic engagement since at least 2010 under the name WeVote, with students becoming active parts of the institutional effort in 2016 when the committee was formalized. This plan is designed to promote the adopted mission of WeVote, a non-partisan body to organize and promote civic learning and democratic engagement at Western Michigan University, and promote the three four goals, 1) Voter Registration, 2) Voter Education, 3) Voter Turnout, and 4) Institutionalizing Civic Engagement at WMU. This action plan is designed to serve through the November 2020 election with many of the aspects hopefully continuing beyond that time. This plan will be implemented and monitored by the WeVote committee and updated as necessary.

Leadership

WeVote is made up of students, faculty, and staff members as well as community members who have all agreed to act in a non-partisan way while carrying out the work of WeVote. The Committee will be lead by a faculty co-chair, staff co-chair, and the WSA Vice President for Political Affairs. The key aspect of the committee members will be their passion for advancing democratic engagement amongst Western Michigan University students.

Community members are a key part of WeVote, including the League of Women Voters of Kalamazoo and the Clerk's for the several areas directly surrounding Western Michigan University's campus where students primary live when in person. Partners must agree to act in a non-partisan way when representing WeVote. The external partners, as well as members, are allowed to act in a partisan way, as long as they are not doing so while associated with WeVote. The only exemption to this rule is members of WeVote may not be paid members of any political campaign.

Current members, as of September 2020 include:

Co-Chairs Fall 2020

- Emma Baratta, Western Student Association Vice President for Political Affairs, wsa-politicalaf@wmich.edu
- Emily Duguay, Director of Theatre Arts Management, emily.duguay@wmich.edu
- Denise Keele, Political Science & Environment and Sustainability, denise.keele@wmich.edu

Students

- AJ Howard, WeVote Communications Coordinator, alec.j.howard@wmich.edu
- Alex Lawrence, Campus Election Engagement Project Fellow, alexander.s.lawrence@wmich.edu
- Ava Strasser, Campus Election Engagement Project Fellow, ava.j.strasser@wmich.edu
- Vyshnavi Charrlotte Richard Job, WeVote Intern, vyshnavicharrlotte.richardjob@wmich.edu
- Lillian Chechak, At Large Member, lillian.m.chechak@wmich.edu
- Graduate Student Association, [Craig Morris](#) and gsa@wmich.edu

Staff

- WMU Signature Director, Evan Heiser, evan.heiser@wmich.edu
- Bernhard Center Director, Paul J Terzino, paul.terzino@wmich.edu
- Waldo Library, Michele D Behr, michele.behr@wmich.edu
- Residence Life, Laura L Darrah, laura.darrah@wmich.edu
- Athletics, Diversity Task Force Leader, Makiba Batten, Makiba.Batten@wmich.edu and Keanah A Smith, keanah.smith@wmich.edu
- Senior Copywriter, Office of Marketing & Strategic Communications, John W Kasdorf, john.kasdorf@wmich.edu
- Producer/Director, Office of Information Technology, John Mackenzie, john.mackenzie@wmich.edu

Instructors

- Teaching Assistants Union, [Adam Bennett](#) and president@tauaft.org
- Steven B Bertman, steven.bertman@wmich.edu
- Timothy B Palmer, timothy.palmer@wmich.edu

External Partners

- LWVKA, Denise Hartsough, denise.hartsough@gmail.com
- Next Gen, Natalya Henderson, natalya.henderson@nextgenamerica.org
- Rock the Vote, Katie Grover, katie.grover@rockthevote.org
- Voters Not Politicians, Lee Kirk, leezoo@chartermi.net
- Public Interest Research Group in Michigan, Davis Yeobah, daviskwasi.arthur-yeboah@wmich.edu and Benjamin Shafer bshafer@pirgim.org
- WeVote Creator, WMU Alum, Chiante Neshay Lymon chiante.n.lymon@wmich.edu

Clerks

- City of Kalamazoo, Scott Borling, borlings@kalamazoocity.org
- City of Kalamazoo, Shelby Moss, moss@kalamazoocity.org
- Oshtemo Township, Dusty Farmer, dfarmer@oshtemo.org
- Kalamazoo County, Sarah O. Joshi, sojosh@kalcounty.com
- Kalamazoo Township, Mark Miller, clerk@ktwp.org

WeVote has the support of senior leaders at the institution including the University President, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Vice President for Student Affairs, Vice President for Government Relations, and the AAUP Faculty Union all who have contributed support, including funds, to WeVote in the recent years which have made the operations possible.

Commitment

Western Michigan University has visibly committed to democratic engagement through WeVote in the recent years. The most visible example of this is the President, Dr. Montgomery, appearing in a video promoting democratic engagement during the 2018 election cycle that was aired during one of the football games in fall 2018. Other visible commitments have included the wmich.edu/vote top level domain website, visit by Dr. Montgomery to a WeVote committee meeting, and other commitments by senior staff.

The University has focused on Civic Engagement through the [Shared Gold Civic Action Plan](#). Civic engagement is part of the culture at Western Michigan University as most clearly demonstrated by WMU being recognized with the Carnegie Community Engagement Classification.

WeVote is working to better institutionalize democratic engagement at Western Michigan University and is the clearest example of how the institution is committed to advancing this work.

Goals and Strategy

The goals of Western Michigan University toward Democratic Engagement through WeVote are:

1. Voter Registration
 1. All eligible WMU students will be registered to vote.
2. Voter Education
 1. Student will be educated on the process of voting.
 2. Students will be educated on the issues and candidates for upcoming elections.
3. Voter Turnout
 1. Students registered to vote in Kalamazoo County will vote in person.
 2. Students registered to vote outside of Kalamazoo County will complete the absentee voter process.
4. Institutionalizing Civic Engagement at WMU
 1. Train all students pursue active citizenship.
 2. WeVote is formally recognized as a campus effort.
 3. Establishment of a Center of Civic Engagement with full-time staff.

These goals are long-term goals that are meant to serve as ongoing areas to strive for.

To accomplish the goals, the following strategies have been setup. These strategies are broadly defined for the fall 2019-spring 2021 time frame.

1. Voter Registration
 2. All eligible WMU students will be registered to vote.
 1. In-class voter-registration efforts.
 2. Fall welcome and bronco bash voter registration.
 3. Voter registration in/by residence halls.
 4. Voter registration in/by dining halls.
 5. Voter registration in/by library.
 6. Registered Student Organization (RSO) voter registration.
 7. Athletic team voter registration.
 8. Maintain voter registration station in student center.
 9. Host National Voter Registration Day event.
2. Voter Education
 1. Student will be educated on the process of voting.

1. Provide training for voting including mock elections
2. Provide training on electoral process (including districts, precincts, etc.)
2. Students will be educated on the issues and candidates for upcoming elections.
 1. Host/co-host events and speakers on issues and candidates
 2. Provide support for student advocacy (including student protests)
 3. Partner with political issue and party registered student organizations through advisement and promotion
3. Voter Turnout
 1. Students registered to vote in Kalamazoo County will vote in person.
 1. Maintain strong partnership with Kalamazoo County Clerk's office.
 2. Host voter turn-out events on all (local, state, and national) election days.
 2. Students registered to vote outside of Kalamazoo County will complete the absentee voter process.
 1. Organize a campus-wide pledge to vote campaign.
 2. Maintain ballot drop off location at Bernhard Center.
4. Institutionalizing Civic Engagement at WMU
 1. Train all students to live in a democracy
 1. Students have at least one class where civic engagement is part of the curriculum.
 2. Present to registered student organizations about how to be civically engaged.
 3. Organize student events to local forums (i.e. city council meetings).
 4. Support WMU Signature Civic Engagement pathway.
 2. WeVote is recognized as a campus effort
 1. Maintain cross-institutional partners and members.
 2. Keep cabinet and senior leaders informed of WeVote efforts.
 3. WeVote has a permanent operating budget.
 4. Maintain a wmich.edu website dedicated to nonpartisan student voter education.
 5. Fully utilize Western Michigan University National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) data (i.e. assessment, evaluation, and research)
 6. Publicize Western Michigan University National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) data.
 7. Apply to become a Voter Friendly Campus, work with Campus Vote Project, participate in Student Learn Students Vote (SLSV) Coalition, join the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge, Campus Election and Engagement Program (CEEP), and/or Vote Everywhere (Andrew Goodman Foundation).
 8. Apply for grants to support WeVote efforts.
 3. Establishment of a Center of Civic Engagement with full-time staff

Update: In response to COVID-19 the following new strategies will be employed to continue to work toward the overall goals while understanding that most in-person activities are no longer possible.

1. WeVote will contract with TurboVote to provide digital assistance with voter reminders, registration, and vote-by-mail.
2. WeVote will focus on a social media campaign. This will include posts and videos that promote the importance of voting, and dispel myths around voting, specially vote-by-mail.

NSLVE and Reporting

Western Michigan University has shared the NSLVE publicly through WMU News:

[WMU student voting rate shows growing civic engagement](#)

Additionally, the 2018 NSLVE report is available for public download on the main WeVote website. This report has been shared with the WeVote Committee and will aid in the implementation of strategic action items.

Evaluation

Assessment will be completed by WeVote to determine which activities were most successful. This will include tracking of the number of voter registrations collected at various events, recording attendance at events, and through voting participation rates through NSLVE. The purpose of this assessment work is to continue to improve the work of WeVote and adjust strategies going into upcoming elections.