



Michigan Department of State & Collegiate Student Advisory Task Force

College & University Recommendations: Student Voter Education and Engagement

Introduction and Key Recommendations

Drafted by the 2022 Michigan Collegiate Student Advisory Task Force in partnership with the Michigan Department of State, this resource offers guidance and best practices for Michigan's colleges and universities to engage and educate student voters on their campuses.

The Collegiate Student Advisory Task Force (CSATF) strongly encourages Michigan colleges and universities to adopt the following key recommendations **prior to the statewide general election on Tuesday, Nov. 8, 2022.**

- Enact a university-wide Election Day policy that establishes Election Day as a school holiday, giving students, faculty, and staff the day off to participate in voting or election day activities.
- Encourage staff, faculty and students to use the Election Day school holiday to serve as election inspectors (i.e. poll workers) by contacting local clerks to apply, and to sign-up to serve through the Department of State's Democracy MVP program at Michigan.gov/DemocracyMVP.
- Coordinate a university-wide messaging campaign of elections information, resources and reminders for students, faculty, and staff.
- Enroll in the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge [ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge](#) and [NSLVE](#) and join the [ALL IN Presidents' Commitment to Full Student Voter Participation](#).

The remainder of this document includes the full recommendations of the CSATF, including both short-term and long-term planning, programming, and engagement goals for Michigan's higher education institutions. The Task Force and the Department of State (MDOS) serve as partners to Michigan's colleges and universities in voter engagement and education efforts, and we are happy to provide support upon request.



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Please email any questions or requests for information to Sarah Reinhardt, Director of Special Projects for the Michigan Department of State at ReinhardtS@Michigan.gov.

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Useful Links

[Michigan Department of State Graphics, Flyers and One-Pagers](#)

[Democracy MVP Poll Worker Recruitment Toolkit](#)

Institutionalization

The following recommendations consist of policies, procedures, and awareness campaigns that universities may implement on campus to encourage student voter participation and civic engagement.

Campus Specific “Get Out The Vote” (GOTV) Campaign

Create an official, coordinated "GOTV" campaign to provide non-partisan information to students about upcoming elections (e.g. voter registration requirements, ways to cast a ballot, deadlines for registration and voting). The campaign should include:

- Calls to action for students to engage civically by appealing to school spirit, campus pride, university imagery and core values.
- Informational content including graphics, flyers, one-pagers, videos, events and a voter information website (see “*GOTV Student Website*” recommendation below for more information).
- Campaign social media accounts, created across all platforms, and campaign materials to be shared on all official university accounts.
- University leaders and prominent campus figure participation in promotional content including videos, graphics or sharing posts on social media.
- Encouragement to participate civically beyond voting (e.g. serving as a poll worker, volunteering for a voter registration drive, making sure friends are registered and informed)

University Social Media

Universities should use their wide-reaching social media accounts to encourage and remind students and campus communities to register and vote. Use of social media is more effective than traditional informational resources due to its popularity among students and ability to reach a wider audience.

- Schools with multiple social media accounts (e.g. official university, athletics, student government, alumni) could coordinate each account for circulating information.



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- Schools should share reliable elections information by re-posting elections content from the Michigan Department of State (MDOS) social media accounts, including the Collegiate Student Advisory Task Force accounts.

GOTV Student Website

Create a university web page dedicated to student voter information and engagement. Key features and promotions of the website should include:

- Information on the following:
 - University guidance on Election Day policies for instructors and students (See *“Election Day as a School Holiday”* section below for further details)
 - How to register to vote in MI
 - How to vote absentee in MI
 - Important dates and deadlines
 - Referral to non-partisan voting guides (i.e. Vote411)
 - Michigan voting rights information
 - Information for out-of-state students attending school in Michigan
- A simple, accessible and promotable URL (i.e. something easy to remember like msuvotes.msu.edu).
- Links to the webpage in easily accessible and prominently featured places on the university home-page and on student portals.
- Links to the webpage and updates should be circulated to students and faculty via email, social media and informational GOTV campaign.

Student Voter Resource Packet

Provide physical copies of information that may be easily handed to students at events. Packet should include:

- Information on the following:
 - University guidance on Election Day policies for instructors and students (See *“Election Day as a School Holiday”* section for policy recommendations)



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- How to register to vote in MI and a printed application
- How to vote absentee in MI and a printed application
- Important dates and deadlines
- Referral to non-partisan voting guides (i.e. Vote411)
- Michigan voting rights information
- Information for out-of-state students attending school in Michigan
- A first-time voter walkthrough. Student populations often include first-time voters, or voters who may need a little extra information to get to the polling place and cast an informed vote. This guide may be a resource students could bring with them to the polls to refer to.
- Packets should also be available online on the student voter website in PDF, or word document format.
- Packets should include a QR code to online university voter resources or Michigan.gov/Vote.

Election Day as a School Holiday

Implement policies aimed at maximizing student voter participation by designating Election Day as a school holiday.

- Communicate with faculty to ensure no assignments are due on Election Day.
- Election Day policies serve to offer the chance to vote, to remind students, faculty and staff that there is an Election Day approaching, and to allow universities to prioritize civic engagement.
- Students, faculty and staff should be strongly encouraged to use the school holiday to serve as paid election inspectors (i.e. poll worker) to help with running local elections in their communities. Michigan has a critical need for election inspectors with project management experience and computer skills. Local election clerks in campus communities are eager to engage student, faculty and staff to serve in these critical roles.



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Student Orientation and Admissions Voter Information

Provide students with voter information in their admissions packet and while attending orientation programs. Information should include:

- A list of and contact for all university related resources including a link to the university voter education website, voter information packets, and information about the local city(ies) or municipality(ies) clerk's office(s).
- A clear process for how students can register to vote, options for voting, important elections dates and deadlines, and a referral to Michigan.gov/Vote, the State of Michigan's voter information resource center.
- Information on upcoming university sponsored voter education events.
- A link to the Voter Information Resource Center (Michigan.gov/Vote), and a link to university voter education web pages on admissions letter's sent to admitted students.

Free Postage Program

Offer free postage to all students on campus.

- This offering will remove barriers that students may face sending mail of any type, including (but not limited to) returning absentee ballots, registration forms or other official forms.
- Free postage must be offered to all students for any reason, not just to be used for returning a ballot.

Student Life Engagement

The following recommendations pertain to recommended voter education and engagement coordination between university administration, faculty and staff with student organizations and programs.



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Student Government Engagement

Student government or student leadership should take an active role in participating in and encouraging civic engagement, voter registration and participation on-campus.

- Student government presentations, like those at orientation, should include information about elections resources and engagement .
- Student governments should have a webpage for students to provide university and elections resources and should use social media and other platforms to promote posts and information.
- Student governments should host a student voter registration and preparation drive or series of events in coordination with the university’s GOTV campaign (see the “*Campus Get Out the Vote (GOTV) Campaign*” section above for additional recommendations).
- Student governments should partner with other university entities, administrators, schools, or student organizations to host voter education events or drives.

Athletics and Program Engagement

Engage university programs such as athletics, academic and professional clubs, social organizations (i.e. sorority and fraternity chapters), to promote voter engagement. This may include, but is not limited to:

- Sponsor voter registration or turnout challenges between student organizations.
- Encourage intra-organization Get Out The Vote (GOTV) efforts and event collaboration.

Student Voting and Political Organization Engagement

Universities should encourage and promote non-partisan voter engagement student organizations and a bi-partisan collection of student organizations as resources for students.

- Most universities have one or several political clubs on campus, both of a nonpartisan and partisan nature (e.g. Young Republicans, Young Democrats). During elections these student organizations help foster student engagement.
- Encourage students to become a member, join an email list, or contact club leadership to provide thoughts and ideas.



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- Encourage coordination and co-sponsoring among student organizations for on-campus voter engagement and education events.

Paid Voter Engagement Student Workers

Universities should create paid positions on campus for students to provide civic engagement and voter education. This position may be supported by different areas across campus, including the Community Engagement Center, or a specific student voting institution within your campus.

- Work could include but is not limited to:
 - Planning non-partisan, on campus voter education and engagement events
 - Encouraging voter engagement from students
 - Managing social media for a student voting institution within campus

Community and Non-Profit Engagement

The following recommendations pertain to support and coordination universities may provide to local community members and election administrators, and an outline of helpful state-wide non-profit student voter engagement resources.

Local Clerk's Office Coordination

Universities should connect with local clerks, responsible for administering local election, to coordinate voter engagement and education efforts. Coordination with local election clerks should include:

- Requests and support for hosting a satellite clerk's office and on-campus polling place, which can significantly reduce barriers for student voting. Coordinate with clerks for planning for on-campus voter education and registration events.
- Provide the campus community with clerk contact details and local polling place information, provided by the local clerk's office.
- Encourage campus populations to serve as election inspectors in local clerk's offices, filling a critical need for skilled election workers.



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No-Cost Community Transportation

Provide community access to no-cost university transportation on election day. Options for no-cost transport for members of the public may include:

- Adding stops to existing campus transportation or bus routes at clerk's offices or local polling places.
- Advertising free or low-cost public transit routes.
- Transportation should be offered to all students for any reason, not just to be used for the purpose of voting, registering to vote or for returning a ballot.

ALL IN Action Plan

Participate in the ALL IN Challenge, create an Action Plan, and receive a campus designation after elections have concluded.

- ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge's helps universities to foster civic culture and institutionalize democratic engagement activities and programs.
- The ALL IN Challenge requires enrollment in NSLVE membership and partners with non-partisan student voter organizations, including the Michigan Collegiate Voting Challenge and Big Ten Voting Challenge

Campus Vote Project

Campus Vote Project is dedicated to supporting increased access to the democratic process, specifically highlighting and tackling the barriers that young people and students face.

- Campus Vote Project provides resources and support to universities for increasing student voter engagement.

Campus Vote Project student fellows exist on many campuses across Michigan and are a valuable resource for student voter engagement. More info on Campus Vote Project is available at www.campusvoteproject.org

NSLVE Membership

The National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) is a service to colleges and universities interested in learning about their students' voter registration and turnout data.



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- All Michigan universities are encouraged to sign-up for NSLVE by using this link: idhe.tufts.edu/nslve/join-nslve
- To join NSLVE, universities must submit a 2-page authorization form. The document must be signed by an authorized signatory on behalf of your institution. Typically, the signatory for a campus is a President, Vice President, Dean of the College, Dean of Students, Provost, Registrar, or Institutional Research Director.

Faculty and Staff Engagement

The following recommendations pertain to elections resources and engagement opportunities for university faculty and staff members.

Non-Student Voter Resources and Education

Faculty and staff should be included in non-partisan voter information outreach and engagement, and provided with consideration and accommodation to reduce barriers to voting.

- Faculty and staff should receive consistent communication (at the beginning of and throughout each semester) regarding important election dates, deadlines, resources, and on-campus opportunities for voters.
- Faculty should be encouraged to include voter education, resources and important elections dates and deadlines in classroom materials (i.e. class syllabus or class web pages)
- Encourage faculty and staff to sign-up to serve as paid election inspectors with local clerks.

Civic Engagement Office

Universities should select employees to serve as members of a group dedicated to campus civic engagement. This group should:



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- Create and/or coordinate university and campus get out the vote (GOTV) campaigns (see “*Campus Get Out the Vote (GOTV) Campaign*” in the previous section additional details).
- Coordination between different groups on campus, (e.g. administration, faculty, and student government) to ensure that work is not overlapping or duplicative, to coordinate messaging, and to ensure that campus resources are being used efficient.
- Coordinate between internal (e.g. student organizations, departments, schools and staff), and external partners (e.g. local election clerks, state administrators).
- Composed of a combination of diverse faculty, staff and administrators
- Be fully and sufficiently funded by the university, with at least one full-time staff person in addition to faculty representatives.