

Democratic Engagement Action Plan

Michigan Technological University

May 31, 2024

I. Executive Summary

Michigan Tech is a globally recognized technological university that educates students, advances knowledge, and innovates to improve the quality of life and to promote mutual respect and equity for all people within the state, the nation, and the global community. Foundational to that vision is to encourage and support democratic engagement. Democratic engagement underlines or supports many of the institution's stated strategic goals, including:

- Encourage understanding of public policy issues.
- Foster mutual respect in personal and professional interactions.
- Promote social and civic responsibility as well as ethical conduct.
- Promote equity, inclusiveness, and collegiality through openness, engagement, mutual respect, and understanding of diverse perspectives.

Additionally, one of our university-wide Undergraduate Student Learning Goals (#8) is social responsibility and ethical reasoning, which states, "[Students] will understand their role as citizens and their responsibility to work with others in promoting quality of life and a sustainable society." Democratic engagement also aligns with our institution's values - particularly our value of community, which states "We inspire an engaged community that actively seeks improvement through acceptance and understanding."

In the spring of 2024, stakeholders from across campus including faculty, staff, and students reconvened to coordinate democratic engagement efforts to register new voters, educate students on the voting process, and encourage critical conversations leading up to the fall 2024 election. The purpose of this plan is to document the current state of democratic engagement on campus and to identify strategies to expand student engagement in the democratic process. This plan will be implemented on Michigan Tech's campus located in Houghton, Michigan. Most aspects of the plan will occur in-person and are targeted to students in the local area, though some aspects will occur online in order to reach a large audience. Aspects of the plan are already being implemented and the timeframe for the remaining initiatives last until the end of the fall semester. The plan will be updated every two years in coordination with the national election cycle, however, the group endeavors to continue meeting in off years to strive for greater continuity of democratic engagement efforts.

Key members involved in the creation of this plan include:

Staff

- Sarah Dowd, University Athletics
- Danielle Meiorow, Student Leadership and Involvement Office
- Christopher Sanders, Center for Diversity and Inclusion

- Dorianne Shaffer, Van Pelt and Opie Library
- Mitchell Spitzley, Residence Education and Housing Services

Faculty

- James Bittner, Engineering Fundamentals

Students

- Cole Pierucki, Orientation Executive Staff
- Matthew Staats, Undergraduate Student Government Political Affairs Committee
- Lauren Stern, Fraternity and Sorority Life

These individuals were selected and recruited based on both their individual interest, as well as their involvement on campus. Individuals with key audiences, such as engineering students, athletes, and underrepresented students were specifically requested to participate in order to achieve the group’s goal of reaching a diverse audience and ensuring equity. We thank each of these individuals for their efforts and participation.

This year’s effort is led by Danielle Meirow, Director of Student Leadership and Involvement, however, no individual unit/office/division is responsible for implementation of this plan. The group collectively discussed and selected initiatives that will be implemented both individually and collectively. This level of shared responsibility is intended to combat challenges with turnover and succession.

Michigan Tech’s registration rate and voting rate has continued to increase since the inception of the working group back in 2018. The midterm voting rate was only 9.7% back in 2014, but increased to 25.8% in 2018 and 30% in 2022. Similarly, our voting rate during presidential election years was 34.3% back in 2016, but increased to 56.7% in 2020. The working group and our campus community are dedicated to ensuring a continuation of this upward trajectory.

II. Leadership

Working Group

The Voter Engagement Working Group brings together many diverse stakeholders. The team members from Michigan Technological University who have been integrally involved in developing and supporting our action plan include:

Staff

- Sarah Dowd, University Athletics
- Danielle Meirow, Student Leadership and Involvement Office
- Christopher Sanders, Center for Diversity and Inclusion
- Dorianne Shaffer, Van Pelt and Opie Library
- Mitchell Spitzley, Residence Education and Housing Services

Faculty

- James Bittner, Engineering Fundamentals

Students

- Cole Pierucki, Orientation Executive Staff
- Matthew Staats, Undergraduate Student Government Political Affairs Committee and Democracy Fellow
- Lauren Stern, Fraternity and Sorority Life

Community and government partners with whom we have a working relationship include:

- **League of Women Voters of the Copper Country**
- **Campus Vote Project**
- **ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge**
- **Jennifer Kelly**, Houghton County Clerk
- **Ann Vollrath**, City of Houghton Clerk

Current Support

Administrative Support

The working group has the administrative support of the Vice President for Student Affairs, as well as the Dean of Students. Both administrators have reiterated the importance of the working group and actively support implementation of the action plan. This includes supporting staff participation in the working group, utilizing their communication platforms to reach a wide student audience, and advocating for additional support on campus and in the community. Additionally, the chair of the working group is accountable to the Dean of Students as their direct supervisor. This allows for regular dialogue on the challenges, successes, and needed support for this action plan.

This year the Vice President of Diversity and Inclusion has also tangentially supported our efforts through the development of a Bridging Community working group that shares many principles with our efforts. The Voter Engagement working group chair was invited to participate which has opened up greater opportunities for collaboration. Additional support from administration has also been demonstrated through continued participation in NSLVE which allows for greater assessment of our efforts. While we are not currently a signatory to the Higher Education Presidents' Commitment to Full Student Voter Participation, we hope to seek and receive that support this year.

University Department Support

Many campus departments also support our initiatives. As previously mentioned, a faculty member from Engineering Fundamentals has been involved in the creation of this plan to integrate efforts into the classroom for engineering students. Staff from Social Sciences have continuously made themselves available as a resource and have generously offered to share our educational modules in their courses. Students in relevant courses will also be encouraged to volunteer to support voter engagement efforts on campus.

Several Student Affairs departments have been involved in the creation of this plan or otherwise supported our efforts. The Wahtera Center for Student Success has supported several efforts to engage with both incoming and current students. They have allowed space in mailers to encourage voter registration, included modules on voting in pre-arrival information, allowed tabling space at orientation events for our working group, and included information on voting in their success courses. Representatives from Residence Education & Housing Services and the Center for Diversity and Inclusion were actively involved in the creation of this plan. Both have allowed for the training of student staff to support voter engagement efforts on campus.

Additional departments who have actively engaged in the creation of this plan include the Library and University Athletics. Working with these departments expands our reach on campus. The library is a campus hub and is regularly visited by a wide range of students and staff. Working with athletics has allowed for more communication with student athletes, as well as a greater presence at sporting events.

Student and Student Organization Support

Students from key organizations have been integral in creating our plan and will be involved in implementation. These groups include the Undergraduate Student Government, the Orientation team, and a representative from Fraternity and Sorority Life. The Undergraduate Student Government has been a continuous partner on democratic engagement initiatives since we began making action plans in 2018. Recognizing the value of democratic engagement the Undergraduate Student Government has also allocated funding from the Student Activity Fee to support our initiatives.

Members of the Orientation team have also been engaged for several years and have worked with us to create opportunities for incoming Huskies. Fraternity and Sorority Life are new partners this year, but have demonstrated tremendous enthusiasm for both spreading the word within their own community and volunteering to support initiatives on campus.

Community and/or National Organizations

Michigan Tech has engaged with several national organizations to develop our democratic engagement efforts on campus including Campus Vote Project, All In for Campus Democracy Challenge, and Ask Every Student. We regularly use online resources and attend online training sessions, as well as consult with organization staff members as needed. We are also grateful to have hosted Democracy Fellows through Campus Vote Project on Campus for the past several years. This role has been integral to ensuring the continuation of our efforts on campus.

Locally, our group has had regular communication with the League of Women Voters and our election officials: Jennifer Kelly, the Houghton County Clerk, and Ann Vollrath, the City of Houghton Clerk. The League often participates in public tabling events offered on campus and volunteers for large events such as the Voter Registration Drive. Similarly, the clerks are familiar

with our working group, attend meetings when requested, and have historically agreed to participate in on campus voter registration drives.

Recruitment

The working group recruits individuals every year to get involved in our efforts through both an open call in our university newsletter and directed requests to departments based on targeted populations or segments of campus. Anyone with an expressed interest is welcome to participate. New members to the coalition this year are representatives from University Athletics, the Center for Diversity and Inclusion, and Engineering Fundamentals. These individuals were strategically recruited based on mission overlap, degree of student contact, work with underrepresented students, and expressed interest. Each of their student populations have historically been underrepresented in our mobilization efforts.

As the fall election season approaches, we hope to add partnerships with additional student organizations. One targeted group we hope to engage is the Graduate Student Government as graduate students are currently underrepresented in our efforts. We hope additional students or student groups will be able to offer volunteer and programming support for planned initiatives, as well as invaluable feedback, so that we may continue to make relevant adjustments for our student body as we implement this year's action plan.

In future years, we hope to re-establish additional partnerships with other academic departments. Specifically, we would like to collaborate with instructors of our new Essential Education curriculum (which is set to launch in Fall of 2025) to ensure that students are being introduced to democratic engagement in their classroom settings as well as co-curricular activities.

Responsibilities

The working group does not currently have accountability goals set by the larger institution. All members of the working group personally see the value of democratic engagement and the overlap with their roles at the institution and have opted into supporting voter engagement efforts. Each individual seeks to coordinate those efforts from their area of responsibility on campus utilizing the resources, connections, and systems available to them.

The group will meet monthly throughout late summer and will transition to bi-weekly meetings in late August as we prepare for National Voter Registration Day and other planned events and initiatives. As we approach the end of the fall semester, meetings will return to monthly as we complete necessary reviews of our activities and submit our report. Following submission, the working group will continue to utilize our listserv to communicate about additional opportunities regarding democratic engagement or changes in roles for members.

Succession

Serving on this working group is not a required job responsibility for any of our members, so ensuring flexibility and succession planning is key. If a member needs to step away, they will be asked to identify another individual from their area who may be able to take their place. If a member is unable to identify another individual or stops participating without notice, the remaining members will do their best to divide responsibilities and continue with the group's goals. At last hire, this working group was also not in the job description of the current chair, but likely would be a considered addition if the role were to turnover.

This year the Undergraduate Student Government also seeks to formalize a liaison role for this position, as a specific obligation for a member of the Political Affairs Committee. Similar positions currently exist for other committees and this would help to ensure their continued involvement and the continuation of the initiative as a whole.

III: Commitment

Democratic engagement underlines or supports many of the institution's stated strategic goals, including:

- Encourage understanding of public policy issues.
- Foster mutual respect in personal and professional interactions.
- Promote social and civic responsibility as well as ethical conduct.
- Promote equity, inclusiveness, and collegiality through openness, engagement, mutual respect, and understanding of diverse perspectives.

Tangible outcomes for these goals have continuously advanced in recent years.

In 2020, Michigan Tech hired its first Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion, who has helped progress critical conversations on campus, including through the recent establishment (Spring 2024) of a Bridging Community working group that seeks to add programming on civil dialogue at all levels of the campus community.

In 2022, the Undergraduate Student Government passed a resolution requesting that the University Senate introduce a proposal that prohibits examinations, projects, presentations, and papers on Election Day. The resolution also encourages (but does not require) instructors to release students from all assignments and mandatory class attendance on Election Day, and to continue working with students who must miss class for an Election-related reason to make up any missed assignments or class time. The resolution was approved by the Senate on April 6, 2022 and subsequently by administration on April 22, 2022.

In 2022, the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) introduced legislation for Division II institutions which states all countable athletically related activities are prohibited on the Tuesday after the first Monday in November as a required day off for civic engagement. This

legislation became effective August 1, 2022. 13 of Michigan Tech’s varsity programs participate at the Division II level, and therefore will observe the required day off for civic engagement. Michigan Tech Athletics is committed to upholding this day of service for our student-athlete population.

In 2023, Michigan Tech’s University Senate approved the revision of general education requirements to create a new Essential Education program which states that “it is our responsibility to ensure that our students are prepared to enter and succeed in this changing world – to have the skills to become culturally-responsive leaders who are civically engaged” as the heart of the program. The new program includes a required Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Sense of Belonging course, as well as an “Essential Education Experience” which is specially designed to have civic engagement as its main focus.

The institution’s commitment is also demonstrated through its participation in NSLVE each year, as well as its involvement with several voter engagement initiatives such as All In, the Campus Vote Project, and Ask Every Student. We have completed an action plan every two years since 2018. Our efforts have culminated in Michigan Tech being listed as one of America’s Best Colleges for Student Voting by Washington Monthly. Michigan Tech was one of only nine Michigan schools to be recognized on the list.

IV: Landscape

Overview

Michigan Technological University (Michigan Tech) is a public research university, home to more than 7,000 students from 60 countries around the world. Founded in 1885, the University offers more than 120 undergraduate and graduate degree programs in science and technology, engineering, forestry, business and economics, health professions, humanities, mathematics, and social sciences. Social Responsibility and Ethical Reasoning is included as one of eight university-wide Undergraduate Student Learning Goals. It states, “Students are able to identify and address conflicting ethical values and develop a sense of responsibility for the broad impacts of individual actions, social institutions and public policy. They understand their role as citizens and their responsibility to work with others in promoting quality of life and a sustainable society. Social responsibility, like civic engagement, means promoting the quality of community life through both political and non-political processes. Ethical reasoning is reasoning about right and wrong human conduct.” As such, Michigan Tech has continued to expand its support of civic learning and democratic engagement in recent years.

Curricular Landscape

As indicated above, new efforts have been made to incorporate civic learning and democratic engagement into the curriculum with the launch of the Essential Education program in Fall of 2025. The general education requirements of the institution do also currently include civic learning and democratic engagement through the aforementioned University Learning Goal on Social Responsibility and Ethical Reasoning. Every undergraduate student is required to take a course with this learning goal as its foundation, in addition to composition, global issues, and a course focused on critical and creative thinking. Additionally, every undergraduate student must take 12 credits in the Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences, which further emphasizes this learning goal.

Additional curricular learning around democratic engagement is also available to students through the Pavlis Honors College. The college offers several areas of focus that incorporate democratic engagement, particularly Community Engagement, Leadership, and Study Abroad.

Co-Curricular Landscape

Civic learning and democratic engagement are present in many aspects of the co-curriculum. Our residential communities are divided into “houses” each with individual names and identities. Each house sets its own community guidelines through active dialogue and regular meetings. The residential curriculum actively seeks to teach students conflict resolution skills and social responsibility. We have several student governing bodies on campus including Undergraduate Student Government, Graduate Student Government, and Inter-Residence Housing Council. Each of these groups are active in both community building and advocacy. They come together to speak with university officials through a combined “Student Commission” initiative. Civic engagement is also promoted through the Student Leadership and Involvement office itself through a variety of community service and leadership programs designed to see the benefits of community building, collaboration, and reciprocal relationships.

Assessment Data

In general, the current rate of voter engagement on campus is low. According to NSLVE data from 2012 through 2022, our institution has lower than average voter engagement, however we have made great strides since the establishment of the working group as demonstrated in the chart below. During the last midterm election, our voting rate reached 30% which was just shy of the all institution average at 30.6%.

Michigan Tech Student Registration and Voting Rate in National Elections

| | 2012 | 2014 | 2016 | 2018 | 2020 | 2022 | 2024 (Goal) |
|---------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------------|
| % Registered | 57.4 | 51.1 | 62.3 | 61.2 | 78.2 | 71.1 | 85 |
| % Voted | 28.6 | 9.4 | 34.3 | 26.9 | 56.8 | 30.0 | 60 |

There has historically been higher voter engagement at Michigan Tech amongst women and students from specific majors like social sciences and natural sciences, and lower voter engagement amongst men and students from majors like engineering and business. Since men comprise around 70% of the student body and a large percentage of students at Michigan Tech are studying engineering, ensuring that these groups are addressed in our efforts is essential to improving the overall rate of engagement. While our strategy is broad in order to reach all students, we have also intentionally sought to recruit partners on campus with a direct connection to students who are less likely to vote.

Following the 2022 election, our campus did also participate in the Campus Vote Project National Student Voting Study (CVP-NSVS) which provided additional insights into student voting habits on campus. Many of our key takeaways are highlighted in the barriers section below.

Internal Barriers

- **Financial resources:** In the past, there have not been resources dedicated to improving voter registration and voting rates at Michigan Tech. We have secured a small amount of funding to provide basic print materials and incentives for the past two years (\$500 in 2023 and \$330 in 2024), however, it is a nominal amount that does not allow for grander goal setting.
- **Leadership:** Expanding voter outreach efforts has been limited in the past by the lack of time that committee members have to dedicate outside the normal scope of their responsibilities. There is no formally designated employee on campus to support voter engagement initiatives and it is a competing obligation for those that have elected to be involved.
- **Apathy:** Because Michigan Tech is a STEM institution and is located in a remote part of the country, students are often apathetic towards social issues. High academic demands further exacerbate this concern. Talking about local issues or getting students to care about issues back in their home precincts is a challenge. This was demonstrated in the CVP-NSVS results from 2023 which indicated that “Lack of Interest” was a moderate influence on why students did not register to vote.

External Barriers

- **Polling place accessibility:** There are no polling places directly on campus and public transportation to bring students to polling is limited. The nearest polling location is over a mile from campus with significant changes in elevation that make voting difficult for students who lack their own transportation.
- **Competing Obligations:** Michigan Tech course work and lab work requirements make accessibility more difficult as students have trouble scheduling time in their day to travel to polling locations.

- **Steps to request absentee ballots:** The vast majority of our students are registered to vote in their home districts of Michigan or out-of-state, making it more difficult to vote. Requesting an absentee ballot must be done in advance and at a busy time of the semester for our students. However, recent changes in Michigan law have removed barriers for voting absentee in Michigan. Voters can now request an absentee ballot for any reason and for any election. We expect it to be easier for students to do so in 2024, as long as they have the correct information about obtaining and mailing absentee ballots.

Internal and External Factors Supporting Success

- In 2018, Michigan voters approved Proposal 3, the Voting Policies in State Constitution Initiative. The initiative expanded voter rights in the state, including:
 - Provides that eligible persons can register to vote by mail until 15 days before an election. Previously, you could not register to vote for 30 days prior to an election.
 - Provides that eligible persons can register to vote in person at a clerk's office during the final 14 days before an election and at the polls on election day. Previously, you could not register to vote for 30 days prior to an election.
 - Provides for the automatic voter registration of eligible persons when interacting with the state regarding driver's license or state ID card, unless the person declines.
 - Constitution provides that any voter can vote using an absentee ballot (no-excuse absentee voting) during the 40 days before an election
- On November 8, 2022, voters in Michigan approved Michigan Proposal 2, the Voting Policies in Constitution Amendment. The measure drastically expanded voter rights within the state, including:
 - Creating a 9-day early voting period
 - Expanding rights in regards to absentee ballots
 - Voters can submit a single absentee ballot application to cover future elections, with certain exceptions
 - Voters can use their signatures as identification on absentee ballot applications and absentee ballot envelopes
 - When officials compare signatures to those on record, voters would be notified and given the opportunity to resolve discrepancies
 - Requiring the state to fund prepaid stamps and a tracking system for absentee ballots
 - Requiring the state to fund a number of absentee ballot dropboxes
 - Requiring that military and overseas ballots postmarked by election day are counted
 - Requires voter identification or a signed affidavit before voting in person
- Access to funding for voter engagement initiatives has allowed us to expand our programming and promotions. We are grateful for financial support from the Student Activity Fee.

- A dedicated student to assist with voter engagement has also helped progress our efforts. We are grateful for the Campus Vote Project’s support through a sponsored Democracy Fellow on campus.

V. Goals and Measures of Success

Short-Term Goals

- **Increase registration and voting rate:** Michigan Tech’s goal for the 2024 election cycle is to increase both registered voters and voter participation. We aim to achieve a rate of 85% of eligible students registered to vote and a 60% voting rate for the 2024 election, an increase of about 7 and 3 percentage points from the last presidential elections, respectively. In light of the increases in past years and changes in Michigan law, the committee believes this is an attainable goal.
- **Update voter engagement webpage:** During the 2022 election, the working group re-established a voter engagement landing page to display pertinent information about registering to vote and options for voting. We hope to expand utilization of and reference to that page this year.
- **Increase visibility of university administrators commitment to civic engagement:** We seek to make our administration's commitment to democratic engagement more apparent to students. Through directed asks we will seek:
 - Consistent reminders on voting deadlines and opportunities for civic engagement in monthly emails sent from the Dean of Students, and
 - a “All In” presidential commitment to Full Student Voter Participation
- **Establish a Voter Engagement liaison role within Undergraduate Student Government:** As previously stated, USG has been a continuous supporter of our efforts, but there is currently no requirement for that relationship to continue. We hope to work with USG to formalize this role within their bylaws to ensure its longevity.

Long-Term Goals

- **Create a sustainable leadership plan for increasing voter engagement and outreach:** As previously mentioned our group is composed entirely of volunteers with no written responsibilities to working group members job descriptions. We hope to continue to pursue adding the chair role to the job description for the Student Leadership and Involvement Director position on campus, as well as incorporating a role for democratic engagement into the Undergraduate Student Government’s political affairs committee.
- **Commitment from University leadership to secure and maintain an on-campus polling location:** While once hosted in the University’s Student Development complex, there is currently not an on-campus polling location. The city and county clerk have both voiced support for returning the polling location to Tech’s campus. The working group will continue to advocate for its return with the goal of it returning prior to the 2024 primaries.

- **Integrate voter outreach across the University:** Building upon prior efforts to engage students within courses, we hope to continue to recruit key faculty to discuss voting and civic engagement as well as information on registration and voting in first-year, general education, and other appropriate courses. We seek to continue to strategically recruit members to the working group who represent a wider breath of campus to enhance engagement in our efforts.

VI: 2024 Strategy

Voter Registration

New Student Orientation: An important part of the 2024 strategy is to continue integrating voter registration into orientation week programming. All new students attend orientation the week prior to classes starting in the fall. Plans include:

- A reminder on the summer postcard to register to vote as a way to prepare for life on campus
- A module on the online orientation course that shares information on voter registration, voting methods, and Tech’s commitment to students Democratic Engagement
- Slideshow sharing information about voter registration and voting methods before large events
- A table at Afternoon on the Town (an event where students get to explore local community organizations) hosted by League of Women Voters
- A peer lead elective event slot during round table discussions on how to vote and when to vote, including hands-on opportunities to register and request absentee ballots
- A table at “A Taste of Tech Traditions” to reiterate that Voter Engagement is a priority at Michigan Tech

Class involvement: For the past several elections, a shareable Canvas module was introduced to campus to easily allow faculty to share voter information with their classes. This task was regularly offered as extra credit or as required course material. The module will be updated once again for the Fall 2024 semester and promoted to faculty through departmental meetings, our daily “Tech Today” newsletter for faculty and staff, and through meetings with the Deans conducted through Undergraduate Student Government. The main focus is voter registration though some material is also provided on voter participation and voter education.

Voter registration drives: Voter registration drives on campus have been successful at increasing student registration rates on campus. This year we will host multiple registration drives.

National Voter Registration Day: As in previous years, stations around campus will be staffed by volunteers and equipped with voter registration forms, absentee ballot request forms, and laptops for students’ to check their voter registration status. The event will run for at least 3

hours in main locations across campus. The target date for this event is on National Voter Registration Day - September 17, 2024.

Additional tabling events: Additional efforts to support voter registration will occur through tabling during targeted events. The Undergraduate Student Government will lead these efforts at K-Day (our student organization fair) and other large student events that are planned in the fall.

Voter Education

Constitution Day: In collaboration with the University Libraries, an interactive exhibit on the gallery wall of the library about voting rights, MTU's voter engagement, and information about this year's election will be displayed. The gallery is located in a major thoroughfare of one of our most active buildings on campus. The display will span the week of Constitution Day ensuring that it remains up through National Voter Registration Day.

Living Room Conversations: The Undergraduate Student Government Political Affairs Committee intends to host several Living Room Conversation events to engage their peers in civic dialogue. "Living Room Conversations" is an open source non-profit that works to heal society by connecting people across divides - politics, age, gender, race, nationality, and more – through guided conversations proven to build understanding and transform communities. Major disagreement on important issues is a fact of life, but it doesn't have to create insurmountable divides. Under the leadership of the Undergraduate Student Government Political Affairs Committee, student organizations will be invited to lead conversations for their peers. Through applying and adapting the conversational model, we hope participants will build relationships that generate understanding and enable collaborative problem-solving. Proposed topics include:

- [The America We Want to Be](#)
- [American Culture: Melting pot or salad bowl or something else?](#)
- [Climate Change](#)
- [Faith and the LGBTQ+ Community](#)
- [Student Debt](#)
- [Women in Society](#)

Bridging Community Working Group Events: In fall 2024, a series of events will occur at Michigan Tech centered around the topic of "Bridging Communities." The purpose of these conversations will be to provide perspectives and skills that will enable participants to "dialogue across difference" in ways that are mutually respectful and optimize positive outcomes. Each event will hopefully contribute to this conversation and an overall positive climate at Michigan Tech. This effort is led by the Office of Diversity and Inclusion. Events targeted towards students currently in process include:

- *Student Rights and Responsibilities* during orientation week led by the Director of Community Conduct and General Counsel. The conversation will cover rights and responsibilities as a Husky, including civil discourse, student code, free speech, and how these align with the Michigan Tech values.

- *Talking Across Divides* on September 12th with Ronald L. Jackson, which will include a brunch with a select audience, classroom visits, and an evening presentation. The conversations will revolve around how to have respectful conversations on controversial topics
- *Combating Misinformation* on 9/19 with Sharon McMahon, a speaker, author & podcast host focused on “providing nonpartisan explanations on the application of constitutional law to contemporary American politics”. Prior to the main event, our student programming board will be co-hosting a civics trivia event.
- *Difficult Conversations*, a two part workshop for students about strategies for handling difficult conversations.

Peer Support at Student Desks: In order to provide greater access to voter information in more casual environments, our working group will be providing optional training for front desk staff at commonly visited offices around campus. The training will be led by knowledgeable staff and will be offered to housing desk staff, Center for Diversity and Inclusion desk staff, Library Ask Us! desk staff, and undergraduate student government members. Trained students will then have the ability to display a sign indicating their availability and willingness to assist with questions on voter registration, voting methods, and how to find ballot information.

Voter Participation

Student Organization Vote Plan Drive: A component of the fall voter registration efforts will be a challenge between student organizations such as Greek life, CDI organizations, and other interested RSOs. Student organizations that have their members submit a vote plan will be entered to win prizes.

Marketing and Communication: When asked about why students didn’t vote, they often state they just didn’t know or they missed a deadline. Our goal is for every student to know through a mass marketing campaign this fall. There will be two major pushes: voter registration and absentee voting. The voter registration push will center around National Voter Registration Day (September 17-24) and the absentee voting push will precede Vote Early Day to ensure the timely arrival of absentee ballots (October 15-22). Each initiative will span as much of the marketing space on campus as possible, including:

- a poster campaign
- table tents
- electronic display systems
- FilmBoard Ad (on-campus film group)
- Lode Ad (Student Newspaper)
- Social Media Accounts of campus partners (USG, SLI, Residence Education, etc.)
- Announcements at home hockey games

We will also work with the Dean of Students to add regular voting related reminders to monthly email updates and other forms of official communication.

2024 Schedule

The following is a proposed timeline for voter registration and outreach efforts during the remainder of the calendar year.

Summer 2024

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|--|
| June/July: Finalize Canvas course for distribution through Orientation and courses |
| July: Draft all mass marketing materials for voter registration and absentee voting |
| July: Develop slides and training materials for desk staff and schedule |
| July: Update Vot |
| early August: Hold planning meeting to finalize orientation activities |
| August 13: Announce Canvas module for Faculty in Tech Today |
| Late August: Invite registered Student Organizations to participate in Living Room Conversations |
| August 24: An Afternoon on the Town tabling event |

Fall 2022

| |
|--|
| Late August: Orientation activities for new student voter registration including tables Taste of Tech Traditions |
| Early September: Voter Registration Day planning meeting; distribute information to classes |
| Early September: Host desk training |
| September 6th: Host voter registration and education table at K-Day |
| September 17th: Constitution week display on voting in the library. |
| September 17-24: Mass marketing campaign on voter registration. |
| September 17: Voter registration day and absentee ballot distribution coordinated with local clerks. |
| October 14-20: Mass marketing campaign on Absentee Voting |
| October 25 & 26: Voting Reminders at Hockey Games and Tabling |
| November 2: Voting Reminder at Hockey Games |
| November 5: Work with student groups to remind students to get out and vote |

VII: Reporting

Information about Democratic Engagement at Michigan Tech is available on our voting webpage. This includes this plan and past NSLVE reports. Information shared publicly in Tech Today, our daily newsletter for faculty and staff, and the Student Scoop, our weekly student newsletter, will include a link to the webpage for anyone wishing to learn more. The plan is also shared with national organizations including Campus Vote Project and All In who publicly post

the plan. Some information will also be shared via social media - this includes NSLVE statistics, event marketing, and general voter education content.

Once data has been compiled from the 2024 election, we will share results from the 2024 action plan amongst team members, university officials, and publicly via the:

- All In website
- Undergraduate Student Government (USG)
- Student Leadership and Involvement office
- A press release in our daily Tech Today newsletter and weekly Student Scoop

VIII: Evaluation

When available, we will obtain new NSLVE data to review any changes in Democratic Engagement in the fall 2024 election compared to the last general election to evaluate if we have met our goals. We will also internally track (in collaboration with city and county clerks) new registrations for Michigan and how many absentee ballot requests were handed out at campus events for reporting efforts. QR codes with click tracking from Bitly will also be utilized to quantify the number of students who check their registration status or scanned in to request an absentee ballot at different tabling events.

Both mass marketing campaigns will also contain QR codes with click tracking to determine which methods of advertising were the most effective at getting students to check their status and request absentee ballots.

Results of the student organization registration drive will also be analyzed to determine if these targeted efforts at specific student groups resulted in a greater proportion of registrations than the general student body. This would support further efforts towards targeted student populations and competition style drives for future years.

As in previous years, qualitative feedback will be gathered from the faculty, staff, and students that are part of the voter outreach and engagement efforts to identify any areas for improvement in future election cycles. In the past, this feedback has been invaluable in improving voter outreach efforts and addressing any issues that have arisen.

These results and metrics will be discussed over the course of 2025 to determine what changes and opportunities exist for future years to better support our efforts and expand impact.