

UW-Madison: All In Campus Democracy Challenge

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UW-MADISON COMMITS TO EMPOWERING STUDENTS TO VOTE

The University of Wisconsin-Madison has joined more than 160 colleges and universities in striving for full student voter registration and participation through the nonpartisan All In Campus Democracy Challenge.

UW-Madison, which joined the Challenge in 2016, received a platinum seal in 2019 for achieving a student voting rate above 50 percent. Student turnout increased to 52.9 percent in 2018 from 35.6 percent in 2014, thanks in part to university-led efforts to encourage voting.

“We encourage our students to stay informed, participate in political conversations, and cast their votes,” said Chancellor Rebecca Blank, who signed the Higher Education Presidents’ Commitment to Full Student Voter Participation. “Civic participation is what makes our democracy work.”

A new opt-in text message service will help keep students and others up to date on elections and civic engagement. To sign up, text BadgersVote to the number 555 888. You will receive information and reminders about key election dates and events. You can also submit questions about voting. The website vote.wisc.edu provides additional information about voting, including how to vote in states other than Wisconsin.

The university is also participating in the Big Ten Voting Challenge, competing for the highest voter turnout in the Nov. 3 presidential election. In 2018, UW-Madison came in second in turnout.

“The COVID-19 pandemic creates additional questions about how to vote safely,”

said Kathy Cramer, political science professor and chairwoman of BadgersVote, which coordinates UW-Madison's voter education efforts. "We want to empower all students to cast their votes while also staying healthy."

Absentee voting will be emphasized to help voters avoid crowds. Students are encouraged to register to vote online, which they can do until July 22 for Wisconsin's Aug. 11 primary election.

"A good way to celebrate Independence Day this year is register to vote in advance for the Aug. 11 election," Cramer said.

How to register to vote in Wisconsin:

- Online – Visit myvote.wi.gov
- Email – Fill out this form (<https://vote.wisc.edu/content/uploads/2020/06/EL-131--Redesign-fully-fillable-12-19-1.pdf>) type in your signature, save as a .pdf, download a .pdf of your UW-Madison enrollment verification using the online enrollment verification tool (<https://registrar.wisc.edu/enrollmentverification/>), and email the form and the enrollment verification to the Madison City Clerk at clerk@cityofmadison.com.

Once you're registered to vote, you can request an absentee ballot and vote by mail. In Wisconsin, voters don't need an excuse or reason to vote absentee.

How to request an absentee ballot in Wisconsin:

- Online: Visit myvote.wi.gov
- Mail: Download the Application For Absentee Ballot (<https://elections.wi.gov/forms/el-121-english>), complete the form and mail it to your municipal clerk's office.

When you receive your ballot, fill it out and mail it back as soon as possible. The U.S. Postal Service recommends mailing it at least one week in advance of Election Day.

In-person absentee voting is scheduled for July 27 to August 8 in Madison; more details will be announced.