Project: 2013 VOTER OUTREACH & EDUCATION CAMPAIGN PLAN FOCUSED ON COLLEGE STUDENTS

ISSUE:

Gearing up for the incoming college students in the Minneapolis area, a comprehensive voter education and outreach campaign targeted at college students must be created and implemented so that all students who are residents of the City of Minneapolis are aware of the election on November 5th, 2013. The plan will be created so that student led organizations can keep and maintain the program for future use for upcoming elections.

BACKGROUND:

Today's young voters and college aged students have been transforming the tone of how elections are being conducted and approached. Not only are they becoming more vocal about the issues that they care about, a large majority of young adults are building their lives on the idea of being socially responsible and are actively seeking ways to encourage behavior that benefits the communities that they live in.
In the City of Minneapolis, there is a large college student population that resides in the city. There are many collegiate institutions in the City of Minneapolis and it brings a diverse group of people in one area. Not only does it attract a diverse group of students but, it could also be seen as a large group of potential voters. In previous elections around the United States, students have been turning out in elections in growing numbers, leading to an interest of the importance of voting.

In general, college students are finding their niche in their own political views. They're becoming more engaged in how everyday politics affect their lives and how it will affect their futures. Today's college students are a different breed that is still being observed by previous generations. The innovations of technology and changes in communication are one of the defining characteristics of today's college students. Cell phones, text messages, e-mail, and social media networks are how young voters communicate today.

According to the Pew Research Center:
- 88 percent of 18-29 year olds are online
- 70 percent of 18-30 year olds use the internet daily and two-thirds check their e-mail daily.
- One-quarter of 18-29 year olds use social media platforms such as Facebook.

One of the key elements of the College Voter outreach program is finding and engaging college students to become active and regular voters. Since more than 80% of 18-29 year olds are using the internet, there are many ways to promote voter information and elections to the college population. Promoting voter registration on the Minneapolis Election website is a key element in allowing college students the access to information to upcoming elections and also to see they're eligible to vote in the City of Minneapolis. Having regular updates of when registration deadlines are approaching and information about same day registration is something that would allow students to be effectively engaged in the general election.

The College Outreach Project will garner attention and create excitement around local elections for college students living in Minneapolis. One of the strongest indicators of whether a person will vote is whether or not they have voted before. Winning college voters will pay great dividends in future elections. Looking back at the previous municipal election and seeing the low voter turnout, the project will mainly focus on the importance of voting in their local elections and also address voter turnout in Minneapolis.

As we begin to implement the College Outreach plan, we hope to accomplish a few goals that will lead to continual partnership between the college students and the City of Minneapolis. Some of the key goals that we hope to achieve this year and in upcoming elections is a larger population of students who are registered to

vote in this year's municipal elections. Along with that, we hope that college students will have a better understanding on how Ranked Choice Voting works and how to rank choices using a RCV ballot.

College Outreach Scope	
1. **Resources**	- Free copying/printing of materials - Student body/organizations - MCTC,U of M, Augsburg - Election Polls - Fair Vote (educational purposes) - Voter registration forms
2. **Activities**	- Print brochures and fliers to post on campuses and bus/light rail routes - Student organizations will help with voter registration and RCV education - Outreach at MCTC, U of M, Augsburg (target population) - Student organization can have an incentive by running election polls
3. **Outputs**	- Number of students that are registered on campuses - Number of students who attend educational workshops on RCV - Number of student ambassadors that help to implement voter registration tables and RCV educational workshops
4. **Outcomes**	**Short term:** Students are registered to vote for this upcoming municipal election **Intermediate**: Students are more educated on the impact of local government decisions and have more involvement in local government. **Long-term:** Students motivate each other to vote during presidential and municipal elections without the help of the city of Minneapolis initiatives, and students participate in local government by running for various offices or working for the public sector.
5. **Goals**	- Awareness - Involvement in the city - Impact ways in which residents of Minneapolis interact with the city - Allow residents to have a voice in decisions that are made in their city and educate them on how to go about having a voice (voting or rallying for personal concerns and issues of interest)

BENEFITS TO THE CITY:

The benefit of this project will be the further development of an informed and engaged electorate among college students. More students who live within the City of Minneapolis will choose to vote, with greater confidence that their votes will count and with a clear understanding of how the process works and how to complete a RCV ballot. In turn, this will result in a greater interest in more student residents understanding the processes of elections. If the project plan were not to be completed, it would likely lead to lower voter participation among student voters and less familiarity and understanding of the importance of local elections in the City of Minneapolis

RECOMMENDATION:

Brochures and fliers on Metro Transit

Description: The branding of the Voter outreach program will be created and implemented throughout the city by partnership with Metro Transit. The fliers will be 11x27 placards that will be placed on specific Metro Transit routes that tend to have frequent college riders. General voter outreach ads targeted at college students will be placed around Metro Transit stations and will inform riders when the election is occurring.

Purpose: Create excitement and curiosity of local elections and future elections among Metro Transit users and when the actual date of the upcoming election is occurring. By utilizing a transit authority, it would supplement the Voter outreach campaign and create visibility throughout the city.

Timeline: The fliers will be installed onto buses and rails before the November 5, 2013 Municipal elections. The mockups of the fliers and bus cards have already been produced and need approval from the Elections department.

Scalability: Ads placed on routes and areas where college student traffic is known. Additional placements could be considered in future years.

Price: Metro Transit has agreed to allow the placement of advertisements relating to the 2013 Election inside some buses without charge. The only cost that the City will incur is the actual cost of printing the advertisements. Considering that, we recommend that 100 Interior bus cards be printed and placed on routes that have known frequent college riders and that we print 1-3 station poster ads.

Item	Size	Cost
Interior bus cards	11x27	$1.16
Station poster ads	46x60	$85-$200 (depending on colors)

Mock-up of potential ads: See Appendix Exhibit D.

Video Contest

Description: The video contest will invite interested groups to submit a general "Why it's important to vote"/"Get out the vote" video. The contest will be administered and judged by the City of Minneapolis Elections and Voter Services division.

The guidelines of the video contest are as follows:
1. All entries must be produced as a video public service announcement (PSA).
2. Each entry must focus on the importance of voting or Ranked Choice Voting in the City of Minneapolis.
3. The length of each video should be between 30 – 45 seconds (not including the 10 second slate, see below).
4. All entries should begin with a 10 second full-screen slate (or "title screen") that includes the following information:
5. Lead Producer's name
6. Title of video
7. Total running time (excluding the 10 second slate)
8. Content must comply with all local and national laws of the country of origin and the United States. Content must not 1) promote illegal behavior; 2) support racial, religious, sexual or other invidious

prejudice; 3) advocate sexual or violent exploitation; 4) violate rights established by law or agreement; 5) invade the privacy of any person; or 6) be otherwise inappropriate by the City of Minneapolis Elections Department in its sole and conclusive determination.

9. The judges' decision is final. The only compensation for submitting a video is the opportunity to be featured throughout the City of Minneapolis' elections website.
10. Students should keep at least one copy of their PSA. The City of Minneapolis is not responsible for any films that are lost, damaged, or that do not upload properly.

Purpose: The purpose of the video contest is to create a venue for community engagement and also provide an outlet for creativity within the community. There are specialized colleges and institutes in Minneapolis who would benefit from the contest because it would provide a small incentive to be creative but also be recognized by the City of Minneapolis.

Timeline: The video contest will be implemented in the Fall of 2013 and the deadline for entries and actual selection of winners will occur before November 5th, 2013.

Scalability: This deliverable can be scaled to the amount of interested individuals who submit a video to the contest and to the audience that the voter outreach programs reaches.

Text message communication plan

Description: Text message alerts will be sent out to subscribed users about specific election days and voter registration deadlines using specific word usage that will be engaging and provide useful information for prospective voters.

Purpose: The text message communication plan will be a supplemental portion of the Voter outreach program because most students have a mobile device. The purpose of the text message communication plan is to expose the outreach program to as many college students as possible.

Timeline: The text messaging communication plan should be implemented in Fall 2013 or earlier.

Scalability: The response rate as a percentage of the number of students reached by text messages could be measured if the messaging was related to a specific event or date that was promoted through text messaging alerts.

Price: Based on using different text messaging carrier advertisers, we have selected three carriers that provide competitive pricing to carry out a text message communications plan to identified subscribers.

Rained out

Initial Cost (Deposit)	$100 minimum
Per message cost	$.05

Wireless Mobile Media

Initial Cost (Deposit)	$9.99
Per message cost	$.10 to $.20

Cellitout

0-100 mobile subscribers	$45/month
101-200 mobile subscribers	$60/month
201-400 mobile subscribers	$95/month
401-600 mobile subscribers	$120/month

<u>Partnership with student organizations through the Voter Ambassador Program</u>

Description: The Voter Ambassador Program is an educational tool that will help structure and strengthen communities throughout the City of Minneapolis. Using the current program that the City is currently implementing, the College Voter outreach program intends to introduce the Voter Ambassador program to college organizations to educate their college peers about elections in Minneapolis and to also educate their peers on Ranked Choice Voting being utilized on the 2013 municipal ballots.

Purpose: The purpose of the Voter Ambassador Program is to engage community leaders to educate their communities about the importance of voting in local elections and future elections. It's an opportunity for the City of Minneapolis to create a gateway between various communities.

Timeline: The Voter Ambassador Program is currently running and will be implemented to college students and organization in early September. From there, we plan to transition college students into the broader Voter Ambassador Program schedule.

Scalability: The deliverable can be scaled down to the number of college students and organizations that become Voter Ambassadors and also the amount of individuals that they communicate with about the local elections and voter information.

Organizational Partners: The College Voter Outreach project plans to connect with various student organizations by offering them resources and access to information on the Municipal elections. We will be using the Voter Ambassador Program as the core educational piece to attract College Voters. Since the Voter Ambassador Program is an open and broad program, we plan to customize it for student organizations and focusing on why it's vitally important to engage in the electoral process as college students in the City of Minneapolis.

<u>Measurability</u>

The Urban Scholar team recommends that, to measure the College Voter Outreach project's success, its executors should consider measures of its quantity, quality, and impact. The Urban Scholar team suggests that, to validate the project's progress, its executors refer to the diagram below.

Quantity	Quality
Number of student organizations and college institutions that we partner with Number of Key deliverables Number of college students reached	Response to key deliverables Response from college students on satisfaction of resources delivered
Impact	
Number of students participating in offered programs Number of students actively engaging in the electoral process in terms of being a Voter Ambassador	

We recommend that the quantity and quality be conducted annually to ensure long term success of the College Voter Outreach Project. Encouraging consistent programming and engagement with college students will contribute to the success of the impact of our College Voter Outreach Plan. By utilizing the Voter Ambassador Program as our main education tool for student outreach, we hope that it will be a known resource available to college students and that it will be utilized in future years.

The College Voter Outreach project will ensure that election-related resources will be available to college students in the City of Minneapolis and that the partnerships made among the different student organizations will lay out a foundation for prospective college voters to become actively engaged in future elections . If this project is maintained, it will lead to a greater interest in the local issues of the City of Minneapolis and an engaged voter population that will continue to grow.