

R W2018.03

A Resolution Supporting the University Recognizing United States Election Day as an Academic Holiday and Discouraging Course Exams on All Local, State, and Federal Election Days

A bill for the consideration of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts Student Government

10 January 2018

Sponsors: Nicholas Fadanelli, Ryan Gillcrist, Patrick Miller, Brian Wang, Kristen Ball, Hanna Simmons, Wyatt Puscas

Whereas, the mission of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts Student Government (hereafter LSA SG) is to “actively seek the voices of LSA students and advocate their interests to improve academic and non-academic life”;¹ and,

Whereas, according to the US Census Bureau, only 45% of eligible voters between 18-29 years of age voted in the 2012 US elections²; and,

Whereas, in 2012 and 2014, 64.2% and 59.6% of U-M students, respectively, were registered to vote, with respective student voter turnout rates of 44% and 14.3%³; and,

Whereas, in November 2016 voter turnout in student-dominated neighborhoods was below 50% while overall turnout in Ann Arbor was 67%⁴; and,

Whereas, low student voter turnout not only disenfranchises students and disincentivizes politicians to work on their behalf, but further harms the fabric of democratic institutions at the local, state, and federal levels;⁵ and,

¹ The Constitution of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts Student Government. Article II

² “Young-Adult Voting: An Analysis of Presidential Elections, 1964–2012”. United States Census Bureau.
<https://www.census.gov/prod/2014pubs/p20-573.pdf>

³ “National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement: Campus Report Student Voting Rates at the University of Michigan - Ann Arbor”. Tufts University.
http://obp.umich.edu/wp-content/uploads/pubdata/surveys/NSLVE_UMAA_2014.pdf

⁴ Washtenaw County Official Election Results: November 8, 2016 General Election
<https://electionresults.ewashtenaw.org/electionreporting/nov2016/index.jsp>

⁵ “Millennials Across the Rich World are Failing to Vote”. *The Economist*.
<https://www.economist.com/news/international/21716023-democracies-are-risk-if-young-people-continue-shun-ballot-box-millennials-across>

Whereas, lines at the Ann Arbor polling stations that students use are long, and the stations are notoriously understaffed and mismanaged - with lines at the Michigan Union during the November 2016 elections being hours long⁶; and,

Whereas, there are some LSA courses that require students take exams on election day; and,

Whereas, last year the Central Student Government passed AR 6-041 “A Resolution to Support an Academic Holiday on Election Day” calling on the University to mark election day as an academic holiday on even-numbered years;⁷ and,

Whereas, the City Clerk of the City of Ann Arbor, the Office of Registrar, the Ginsberg Center, and the Central Student Government have all expressed interest for an academic holiday on Election Day; and,

Whereas, LSA SG has historically advocated for decreasing students’ academic responsibilities around Election Day, in January 2011 passing “A Resolution to Prevent Examinations in Courses on National Election Day”; and,

Whereas, in the Fall 2010 LSA SG Elections, LSA SG asked students “Would you support a policy that asks faculty and instructors to NOT hold examinations on US Elections Days?”; and,

Whereas, of the 1,997 LSA students who voted on the ballot question, 699 (35%) answered “Yes, I would, but only for the general presidential elections (once every 4 years)”, 1081 (54%) answered “Yes I would, but only for general national elections (once every 2 years), and 217 (11%) answered, “No, I would not support this policy”; and,

Whereas, although in the Office of the Registrar’s proposed 2020-2021 academic calendar it includes not having courses on Election Day, this does not necessarily establish that all future Election Days will be days that students do not have courses, and does aid students for the 2018 midterm and Michigan gubernatorial or 2019 elections; and,

Whereas, even if future academic calendars force the University to hold courses on Election Day, freeing students from having to take exams on that day would greatly increase their ability to contribute civically in local, state, and federal elections.

Be it therefore resolved, LSA SG supports the University schedule Election Day as an academic holiday in future University Academic Calendars; and,

⁶ “As polling closes in Ann Arbor, voter turnout downtown hovers around 1,000 in each precinct, despite long lines”. *The Michigan Daily*.

<https://www.michigandaily.com/section/elections/students-frustrated-over-long-lines-some-polling-places>

⁷ AR 6-041 “A Resolution to Support an Academic Holiday on Election Day”. Central Student Government. <https://umcsg.files.wordpress.com/2016/09/a-r-6-041-second-reads.pdf>

Be it further resolved, LSA SG supports the creation of University and/or College of LSA policies to discourage courses from holding examinations on Election Day; and,

Be it finally resolved, LSA SG shall send a copy of this resolution, along with a letter of support, to University of Michigan Provost Martin Philbert, University Associate Vice President and University Registrar Paul Robinson, Associate Registrar for Faculty and Staff Services Lisa Emery, LSA Dean Andrew Martin, and LSA Associate Dean Angela Dillard.