

# Study reveals patterns among student voters

BY BLAISE HART-SCHMIDT  
Staff Reporter

A new study shows that college students are reliable voters, while absentee voting is not.

Northwestern University published a study on college students re-registering to vote in their college town or voting by absentee ballot. The findings were published Oct. 1 by the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement.

Michael Peshkin, professor of mechanical engineering at Northwestern advised the study. NU Decides, a student organization at the university, registered students to vote in Illinois and helped with absentee applications for students from out of state. Peshkin said approximately 1,200 students either registered to vote in Illinois or applied for an absentee ballot.

After the election, Peshkin said the group used the information that could contribute to a study not previously conducted.

"We did a follow-up study to find out a bunch of things about what choices [students] made, about where to vote and whether they applied for an absentee ballot and did they get it, and if they got it, did they send it in, and if they decided to vote locally, did they go and vote," Peshkin said.

More than 80 percent of the students who applied to vote absentee or registered in Illinois voted, showing a high voter reliability, according to the study. The study also called the failure rate for absentee voting "significant," with 16 percent of absentee applicants unable to vote because of an error by the applicant or, more likely, an error made by the county board of elections. Finally, the study showed that students prefer to vote absentee in their home state. Peshkin said this conclusion could change based on the state voters are in, and whether it is considered a swing state. If college students are living in a swing state, they may be

more likely to register in that state.

Peshkin worked with student Kim Castle, who ran the study. Castle said the study is important and can show patterns of college voters.

"I think the study is exciting for a couple reasons," Castle said. "It shows that students do vote in high numbers, high percentages. The other exciting thing is the fact that absentee drives can now be conducted successfully on campuses and it's worthwhile to conduct."

Castle said she would like to use the data she collected to help other colleges get students involved in the voting process.

"I'd like to make a template, a how-to guide for absentee voting registration, and then have an outreach to other campuses with a large percentage of out-of-state voters," she said.

The decision to vote absentee versus re-registering to vote in Kirksville played a part in last year's election at Truman.

Senior Susan Presley and debate partner Larry Crump started Vote Local, an organization to increase student participation in the Fall 2008 election. The organization registered hundreds of voters and offered rides to polling places on Election Day. Presley said there are many benefits to students registering to vote in Kirksville, such as being able to vote in person on Election Day.

"Your vote does matter," she said. "If you're from St. Louis or Kansas City, your vote possibly matters more here. Even the little elections like city council, they matter because they have to do with rental properties and stuff like that."

Presley said, many students do have valid reasons to vote absentee.

"Some people would say no because, 'I live in a small town and there's a school board election, and it really matters to me,' well sure, vote at home then," she said.

# C-Hall experiences multiple fire alarms



Centennial Hall's evacuation techniques are evaluated after three fire alarms

BY CHRIS DREW  
Staff Reporter

The first fire alarms of the semester have come with isolated technical problems and miscommunication, causing confusion for some students living in the residence halls at Truman.

Freshman George Allan Jr. said that during the fire drill conducted in Centennial Hall earlier this semester, the alarms near his room on the first floor rang only a few times.

"I hadn't heard a fire alarm here before, so I didn't know what was going on at first," Allan said. "Then it stopped, so I sat there [in my room] for a minute until I heard the thunder of people leaving."

Since then, two fire alarms have occurred in Centennial, one Oct. 1 and another Saturday Oct. 3. Both were caused by detectors set off in the residence hall's kitchenettes. Centennial hall director William Nelson said the detectors are not extra sensitive and are working normally. He said the hall's main direction now is to take educative steps, putting up guidelines in the kitchenettes and communicating to Student Advisers the need to talk to students about the proper use of the cooking facilities.

"My professional opinion is to educate these folks so we don't burn down the building and also teach them some life skills," Nelson said.

A few problems occurred during the first alarm, but since then, the entire building has been checked and every problem fixed, he said.

"My understanding is that has been totally resolved," Nelson said.

Students who were in the Centennial dining hall during the recent alarms also expressed confusion. Students were asked to turn in their student ID cards as they left in order to keep track of who was eating



Brenna McDermott/Index  
Fire trucks sit outside Centennial Hall on Saturday after the fire alarms went off for the third time this semester.

in the hall. Allan said he was eating in the dining hall during the Saturday alarm and noticed that some students were frustrated by having to wait to turn in their IDs as they left.

"I believe it could be more efficient," Allan said. "I wouldn't go as far as to say I felt unsafe, but it could be done better."

Ed Dunlap, building director of Centennial Hall food services, said the process of having students hand in their IDs as they leave is the only way the dining hall can keep track of who was inside eating before the alarm, and they don't really have a choice but to do so.

Nelson said he plans on meeting with the dining staff in Centennial to make sure they are on the same page with Residence Life in their fire procedure.

John Gardner, interim director of Residence Life, said the main goal in fire evacuations is to get everyone out safely and quickly. Different buildings have different procedures, and the staff tries to usher people to safe meeting places outside, Gardner said.

"We always appreciate student cooperation," he said. "If there ever are any concerns, we encourage them to come talk to us."

A year of growth.  
A day of celebration.



**Celebrate three incredible years of Healthy Woman.**

For three years Northeast Regional Medical Center's Healthy Woman program has empowered women in our area to support a healthy body, mind and spirit for themselves and their loved ones.

**Saturday, October 17**

4 - 8 p.m.

Truman State University Student Union Building

**4 - 6:15 p.m. Women's Expo - FREE**  
Pampering sessions, exhibits, demonstrations, health information, giveaways, and much more!

**6:30 - 8 p.m. Dinner and Motivational Speaker - \$15/person**  
National Speaker Linda Larsen  
Reservations and payment required by October 12.  
Call Laura Gruber at **660-785-1153** to reserve your space.

Join Healthy Woman today even if you're unable to attend the anniversary celebration. Go to [www.nermc.com](http://www.nermc.com) or call 660-785-1153. Membership is free, and the benefits last a lifetime.

THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNER AGENCIES:

PLATINUM PARTNERS

Northeast Missouri AHEC  
Kirksville Obstetrics and Gynecology - Dr. Brent Speak  
OB/GYN Specialty Group

BRONZE PARTNERS

Market America  
First Health LLC  
Walgreens

**HEALTHY WOMAN**  
A NORTHEAST REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER RESOURCE  
315 S. Osteopathy, Kirksville, MO • [www.nermc.com](http://www.nermc.com)

K i r k s v i l l e

Allergy ● Asthma

**Lary Ciesemier**  
D.O., FAAAAI, FACOI  
Board Certified  
Pediatric and Adult  
Allergy Asthma Immunology

**"I have not had allergies this severe until I moved to Kirksville."**

2004 North Baltimore, Suite B, Kirksville, MO 63501

Phone (660) 627-2553

Fax (660) 665-0448