



# News Release

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## **WESTERN GETS STUDENTS INVOLVED IN ELECTION YEAR VOTER REGISTRATION RALLY AND DEBATE WATCH ARE PLANNED**

**St. Joseph, Mo.** —Sept. 22, 2004—Research has shown that if adults do not vote between the ages of 18-22, they will not be likely to vote throughout most of their adult life, only going to the polls when they reach retirement age. With that statistic in mind, Missouri Western State College is planning a number of activities between now and election day to encourage high school and college students to register, to become informed and to vote.

“Vote or Shut Up,” a voter registration rally on Sept. 30, kicks off events. Along with the opportunity to register to vote, the rally will offer food, music and free t-shirts. The event will be held outside the Nelle Blum Student Union from 2-7 p.m., and the community is encouraged to attend. The cafeteria will move their evening meal outside by the rally, also.

The rally coincides with another campaign activity – Debate Watch. The first presidential campaign debate is scheduled for 8 p.m. that evening, and campus and community members are invited to gather to watch the event on a large screen in the Leah Spratt Multipurpose Classroom Building, Kemper Recital Hall, and participate in a discussion following.

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Debate Watch will be held for all scheduled debates: Sept. 30, Oct. 5 (vice presidents), Oct. 8 and 13. Each debate watch will be held at 8 p.m. in the Kemper Recital Hall.

The purpose of the events is to give students the opportunity to register to vote, and then encourage them to become informed and vote, according to Karl Bell, director of the center for multicultural education (CME). “As part of our commitment to the American Democracy Project, we want to produce citizens who are involved in their communities and are engaged politically.”

He noted that this is the first general election that most of the students at Western have been eligible to vote.

“Vote or Shut Up” and the Debate Watch are sponsored by radio stations KKJO 105.5 and Q Country 92.7, the CME, the Center for Student Activities and the Campus Activities Board.

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*Missouri Western State College is a four-year public institution providing a blend of traditional liberal arts and professional degree programs. The college offers student-centered, high quality instruction that focuses on experience-based learning, community service, and state-of-the-art technology. Western is located in St. Joseph, Mo. and is committed to the educational, economic, cultural and social development of the region it serves.*