

Michigan Campaigning, Student Style

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EAST LANSING, Mich., May 16—Up and down Elysium and Strawberry Fields—the dormitory floors have names here—a young man knocked at the doors and grinned as pretty girls opened them or shouted “Come in.”

“Hello. I’m Tom Pantaleo of Students for McGovern,” he said, “and I just want to know if you’ve voted yet.”

All around the campus of Michigan State University the McGovern forces were passing out their leaflets and canvassing. And there was not much doubt that the kids had put together a campus machine that would make an old-style political boss drool.

Last-Minute Efforts

The 13th Precinct, for example, is made up of two big dormitory buildings, Wilson and Holden Halls. The voting was done on the main floor of Wilson, conveniently situated between the snack bar and the lounge so that the students returning from class or paddling down the halls barefoot could vote barefoot without any trouble.

There are 22,000 students living on campus, and this campus vote was expected to deliver a substantial proportion of Senator George McGovern’s total in Michigan.

At 3 P.M. today, a dozen

canvassers from the campus McGovern machine gathered in Sally Podulka’s room in Wilson, picked up their lists and scattered for last-minute door-banging.

“Don’t knock if their room numbers are circled. They are anti-McGovern, and we don’t want to bother them,” a 19-year-old freshman ordered.

Pressing for the Vote

“Guys going to the girls’ side, girls to the guys’ side,” ordered the precinct captain Jim Flora, also 19 and a freshman. “It’s psychological,” he explained. “They pay more attention to you.”

He was quite right, and a long-time election-watcher also noted that canvassing the girls dormitory at Michigan State was quite different from passing out leaflets at a automobile plant entrance.

But the campus machine was not anything to be chuckled at. The lowering of the voting age meant that thousands of potential voters were crowded together, easy to register, easy to propagandize, and easy to push to the polls, particularly with the voting booths as conveniently situated as they were at Wilson.

“We canvassed all the dorms, door to door, identified the voters, asked if they

wanted to know positions, sent them position papers and followed up with phone calls and canvassed again,” said Joellen Snow, 20, a sophomore, and one of the leaders of the McGovern effort here.

They had little competition on campus from other candidates. The goal was to roll up more than 80 per cent of the campus vote for the South Dakota Senator.

This type of machine is coming into existence just as the old-style big city organizations are becoming largely extinct and the labor unions’ vote seems harder to deliver.

Not everyone was happy. Shirley Brown, a registrar at the 13th, said, “I’m not against students voting,” but she blamed their new-found power for pushing up local real estate taxes.

“They move away in four years, and we’re left with the tax bills,” she said. “I’m not against them. My son is a student here.” But she also said that she might have to move out of town because the new political power translates into higher bills for residents.

Today, however, the new machine was just flexing its muscles and learning how strong it could be and where it was weak.

“At least we’ll have some experience when McGovern



United Press International
Jeff Newton, 18-year-old Michigan State freshman, preparing his ballot.

gets the nomination,” said Mr. Flora, already thinking of November.



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DORMITORY VOTING: Michigan State University students being instructed in use of punch-card voting machine at Wilson Hall in East Lansing. Students are voting for the first time in first primary there in 44 years.