



BEARCATS VOTE

Campus Action Plan

Submitted by:
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Overview

McKendree University has a long history of and commitment to civic engagement and service learning. Based on the University's strategic plan, we seek not only to provide an excellent academic experience but also to offer a wide variety of intellectual opportunities beyond the classroom by developing a forum for presentations and discussions about current issues and events.

The University is a member of the Illinois Campus Compact (ILCC), a coalition of 39 colleges and universities that bond together to actively engage presidents, faculty, staff and students to promote a renewed vision of higher education. ILCC is an affiliate state office of Campus Compact, a national organization comprised of more than 1,100 institutions committed to the civic and public purposes of higher education.

In 2011, we received an \$8,000 strategic civic leader fellow grant from ILCC to fund a survey on student organizations' community involvement. We reviewed the current level of civic engagement on campus and assessed the role of the Center for Community Service.

We have been continuously recognized on the President's Community Service Honor Roll for our commitment to volunteering, service learning and civic engagement. We have participated in the U.S. Department of Education's President's Interfaith and Community Service Campus Challenge to bring awareness and diversity to the campus. In 2014, we established a campus Social Justice and Equity Committee to continue our broader efforts to promote knowledge and understanding among all members of the McKendree community about issues of diversity, inclusion, social justice and equality.

McKendree has participated in National Voter Registration Day, held numerous voter registration drives and has actively celebrated Constitution Day with voter registration and fun activities for students.

Since its launch, we have participated in the National Study of Learning, Voting and Engagement (NSLVE). We used data from NSLVE to gain insight into which students participated in the 2012 presidential election which provides us a great foundation for our action plan. In 2012, McKendree University had a 76.5 percent student voter registration rate. Of the students eligible to vote, 52.6 percent voted in the 2012 presidential election. Our student voting rate surpassed the national average (46.9 percent for All Institutions, NSLVE Campus Report) and the national rate of all young adults aged 18-29 who voted in the 2012 presidential election (45 percent, U.S. Census Bureau). In the 2014 midterm election, 69.7 percent of McKendree students registered to vote, however only 25 percent voted. While higher than the national average, work remains to be done, particularly in non-presidential election years.

ALL IN Campus Committee

McKendree's ALL IN committee includes students, staff and faculty from a variety of disciplines and organizations:

Faculty

- Dr. Ann V. Collins, Associate Professor of Political Science
- Dr. Elisabeth Erickson, Assistant Professor of Sport Management
- Dr. Jennifer Guillén, Assistant Professor of Sociology

Staff

- Krysti Connelly, Executive Director of University Communications and Marketing
- George Manning, Assistant to the President
- Jessica Trout, Program Coordinator for the Lyn Huxford Center for Community Service

Students

- Shaquille Armstrong, Sophomore Sociology major; Black Student Organization; Social Justice and Equity Committee
- Maximilian Áviles, Senior International Relations major; Phi Eta Sigma; Phi Kappa Phi
- Lauren Reeves, Junior Speech Communication major; Editor in Chief of *McKendree Review*; New Student Orientation/Peer Mentor
- Teagan Schwab, Junior Organizational Communication major; Student Ambassador; Women's Powerlifting team
- Robert Watkins, Junior in Business Administration; Vice President of Student Government Association; Leadership Program
- Lindsay Winkler, Graduate Student in Higher Education Administrative Services; Campus Activities Board

Engagement

Voter Registration

- On-campus voter registration drives in August, September, and October, during Into the Streets, Involvement Fair, Constitution Day, Exercise Your Right to Vote Zumba and the Black Student Organization and ESLAC Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Voter Registration Event

Voter Education

- Debate-watching gatherings at The Hettenhausen Center for the Arts (The Hett), September 26, October 9, and October 19
- Panel discussion on "The Rise of Donald Trump," with Ann Collins, Brian Frederking, and Sarah Kendzior, The Hett, October 18
- Brown Bag presentations on the elections, , PAC 222, October 26 and November 2

Early Voting Facilitation

- Shuttle to early voting site in O'Fallon, Ill. to cast vote (and register if necessary), October 30

Campus Mock Election

- Presidential mock election in PAC Lobby, sponsored by McKendree's chapter of Phi Kappa Phi, November 1

Goals

1. Continue voter registration efforts, and increase the number of students who vote in the 2016 presidential election to 55% (compared to 52% in 2012) and the 2018 midterm elections to 28% (compared to 25% in 2014).
2. Partner with on-campus and off-campus organizations in an effort to improve democratic engagement. We have actively solicited students from our Student Government Association, Phi Kappa Phi, Phi Eta Sigma and Center for Community Service to take on leadership roles and assist in our voter registration and education efforts. We also regularly work with the St. Clair County Clerk's

office during elections (voter registration drives, election judge training), but we hope to expand our community partnerships.

3. Further develop and implement voter awareness and democratic engagement campaigns. Entitled “Bearcats Vote,” this initiative will create a variety of opportunities to actively engage and discuss current issues and civic responsibility with students.

Gauging Success

We will measure success in several ways to determine if we have met our goals in fostering civic engagement on McKendree’s campus. NSLVE feedback will give us data to compare past student registration and voting rates with current ones. We will also tally participation in voter education efforts, such as debate-watching gatherings, panel discussions, and Brown Bag presentations. Beyond campus, we will count the community partnerships we develop to encourage engagement between our students and the surrounding municipalities and political campaigns.

Summary

Overall, by joining the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge, we are encouraging students to use their voices in the electoral process and to cultivate a practice of community engagement so that after graduation they will be lifelong responsible citizens. This undertaking ties in well with McKendree’s mission to “encourage broader vision, enriched purpose, engagement with community, commitment to responsible citizenship, openness to new ideas and dedication to lifelong learning” (McKendree University Mission Statement).