

# ALVERNIA UNIVERSITY

## Campus Vote Project \* Voter-Friendly Campus \* Final Report \* 2016

### Overview

- A series of targeted announcements and inclusion of specific attention to voter registration, voting encouragement, and voter education in key early-to-mid-fall activities and events.
- Groundwork laid for deeper civic engagement activities and events in spring 2017 semester.

### Coalition

- Office of the Vice President for Student Life and Dean of Students
- Faculty members from Communications, Philosophy, and Political Science
- Staff from the university's O'Pake Institute for Ethics, Leadership, and Public Service
- Student Government Association and Political Science Association
- Berks County and Pennsylvania League of Women Voters

### Analysis of Work

- Voter Registration
  - Each incoming student received a Pennsylvania voter registration form, with a note of personal encouragement to register and to vote, as well as a referral for information about registration in home districts, from the Vice President for University Life and Dean of Students in her/his New Student Orientation (NSO) folder.
  - Following NSO, weekly email, social media, and posted voter registration encouragement announcements were disseminated up until the Pennsylvania voter registration deadline in early October. Each week's announcement was based on a relevant topical theme (e.g., commemoration of September 11, Constitution Day, voter registration deadlines in Pennsylvania and in other states from which our students hail) and most included additional information about where to obtain Pennsylvania voter registration forms on campus and/or about registration in and, if need be, how to use absentee ballots in home districts.

- Voter Education
  - Specific references to voter registration and voting encouragement were included in the Vice President for University Life and Dean of Students' remarks at New Student Orientation and our September 11 vigil.
  - Our Constitution Day commemorations included sessions featuring students and faculty who participated, through the Washington Center, in the Democratic and Republican national conventions, along with representatives of the Berks County and Pennsylvania League of Women Voters.
  - Following the Pennsylvania voter registration deadline and until Election Day, announcements shifted to bi-weekly and focused on voter education and voting encouragement.
- Ballot Access
  - Our campus hosts the polling place for our district.
- Voter Turnout
  - Specific attention to preparing to vote and turning out the vote were the focuses of the final announcements in the weekly series.

#### Successes

- Great collaborations with local partners from the League of Women Voters and the NAACP
- Full house for our Constitution Day commemoration
- Registration tables staffing by our student Political Science Association

#### Barriers

- None

#### Beyond 2016

- Our spring 2017 initiative is called *E Pluribus Unum*, a series of discussions – scheduled alongside selected campus, regional, and national events – to help students, faculty, and staff exchange views, even (perhaps especially) from differing perspectives, to help us find ways to move forward together rather than apart from one another. In response to the call of our patron, St. Francis, to always seek to understand more than to be understood. The first centered on the Presidential Inauguration. Forthcoming sessions will be associated with responses to suffering, from a variety of professional and faith perspectives; equitable access to housing; and sexual violence awareness and prevention; all in connection with significant related campus events.

- For the second year, our annual participation in the Association of Independent Colleges and Universities of Pennsylvania (AICUP) Student Aid Advocacy Day in the state capital will be centered in our Ethics and Community Engagement class, the first course in the sequence that leads to our Community Engagement minor. Preparation for the day is embedded in the course syllabus. Students will meet as a class and individually with state senators and representatives in Harrisburg, as well as with peers from other participating Pennsylvania colleges and universities.

#### NSLVE Data

- We will use the data to establish benchmarks and goals for ongoing improvement.

#### Photos and Stories

- See the fliers, etc., posted separately, for examples of our voter registration/voting encouragement series and the first *E Pluribus Unum* event flier.

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