

Bucknell University

All In for Democracy Challenge

2024 Campus Action Plan

Executive Summary: This plan prepares for the Fall 2024 Elections by organizing a comprehensive voter registration and civic engagement campaign on campus. Through collaborations with key campus groups, including the Center for Community Engaged Leadership, Learning and Research, and external partners like the League of Women Voters and the Dignity Index project, this initiative will ensure that the university community is well-informed and actively participating in the democratic process. Key elements include voter education, civic discourse, and events aimed at fostering an environment of informed, respectful, and engaged citizens.

The Democracy Challenge 2024 is a consolidated campus-wide action plan to coordinate electoral engagement activities with the Center for Community Engaged Leadership, Learning and Research, the Division of Equity and Inclusive Excellence, and the Division of Student Affairs as the central organizers. One major component of this drive is [Bison Votes](#), a campus-wide effort to collaborate across university departments, engage students collaboratively as community-based researchers, strategic planners and civic implementers. We are expanding our outreach from the campus into surrounding communities, working with the League of Women's Voters and other community partners in this effort. We also are partnering with existing student involvement across issues with community and Bucknell leaders. We include both short term and long term strategies for civic education. Those tactics include a description of multiple voter registration events, voter education through lectures and teach-ins, and voter turnout activities. Long-term strategies seek to make civic learning and democratic engagement an established part of Bucknell's curriculum and co-curriculum and reach beyond the election.

The Leadership Team of our Action Plan includes Katherine Faull, Associate Provost and Faculty Director of Academic Civic Engagement, Lynn Pierson, Director of the Center for Community Engaged Leadership, Learning, and Research, Theresa McKinney, Interim Dean of Students, Denelle Brown, Associate Dean of Students, Brent Papon, Director, Campus Activities and Student Media, all working in partnership with student groups, including the Bucknell Student Government, College Democrats, Independents and Republicans and academic departments, such as Political Science and Philosophy. Community Partners include the League of Women Voters, the Susquehanna Valley Mediation Center, Lewisburg Downtown Partnership, TurboVote, etc.

The leadership for this campaign will include several critical groups:

Center for Community Engaged Leadership, Learning, and Research: Overseeing partnerships and educational events, including trauma-informed training and collaboration with the Dignity Index and the Disagree Better model.

Student Voting Coalition: A newly formed student-led group that will focus on voter registration and civic engagement events under the leadership of Juliana Fedorko.

Political Science Department and Bucknell-Mauch Family Fellowship Program: Professor Michael James and three student fellows will lead academic events on voter education and civic engagement.

League of Women Voters of the Lewisburg Area (LWVLA): Partnering to provide education and facilitate voter registration.

Campus Activities & Programs Center: The CAP center serves as a vital resource for student organizations and Bucknell Student Government and will help to organize student led voter registration activities during the fall semester.

Together, these leaders will coordinate a calendar of events, outreach activities, and collaborations to promote widespread student participation in the Fall 2024 elections. As in 2020, we are engaging our mascot, Bucky Bison, to help call attention to voter registration drives in high traffic student areas, such as the student center and the library.

Here is a detailed action plan for voter registration and civic engagement based on the information provided:

Commitment

The university is deeply committed to increasing voter registration and participation, as well as fostering an environment of civil discourse. This is evidenced by the institution's collaboration with civic organizations, participation in the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE), and its involvement with initiatives like the Dignity Index and the Disagree Better model. The commitment extends to hosting voter registration drives, educational workshops, and forums on political engagement.

Campus Landscape

Our voter registration efforts are tailored to the unique campus demographic, which includes first-year students, local residents, and staff. Historical context shows that Bison Votes has successfully integrated voter education into orientation sessions and collaborated with student clubs. The campus will continue to work with the League of Women Voters, the Political Science

Department, and residential advisors to ensure that voter registration and engagement are accessible to all students.

The Student Voting Coalition and TurboVote/Bison Votes website will serve as primary tools for registration and education. Additionally, campus events will be designed to reach students where they are, including residence halls, athletics, and student clubs.

Goals

1. Increase voter registration by ensuring that every eligible student is informed and has the opportunity to register by the October 21st deadline.
2. Foster informed civic engagement by providing voter education through forums, workshops, and tabling events.
3. Promote civil discourse on political and social issues by using tools like the Dignity Index and Disagree Better project.
4. Enhance participation in the 2024 elections through targeted outreach and educational resources.

Strategy

1. Voter Registration Drives:

Campus Registration Events (Sept 30, Oct 1): Pop-up tents and information stations will be set up across campus to register students. These events will have high visibility, including creative ideas like using mascots and sandwich boards to draw attention.

TurboVote/Bison Votes website will be promoted with QR codes on all materials, making registration easier.

Rain locations have been designated to ensure the event continues regardless of weather conditions.

2. Voter Education:

Forums on the 2024 Election: Three student fellows will organize events focused on key issues in the 2024 election, in partnership with the Political Science Department. These will include voter registration events, forum discussions and a series of guest lectures on worldwide elections.

Reading Group on Voting and Religious Liberty: The reading group will discuss an article by Professor Vincent Phillip Muñoz, “Two Concepts of Religious Liberty: The Natural Rights and Moral Autonomy Approaches to the Free Exercise of Religion,” as part of the preparation for the Constitution Day Lecture on October 21st. This event, sponsored by the Putterman Fund and the Legal Studies Program, will provide insights into constitutional law and religious liberty, with a focus on understanding the implications for voting rights. This discussion will inform future actions regarding religious freedom and its intersection with civic engagement and voting rights.

Workshops: A series of workshops will be held, such as the "Disagree Better" sessions hosted by the League of Women Voters and facilitated by Susan Jordan, aimed at improving civil discourse.

3. Collaborations and Events:

Open Discourse Coalition Event (Sept 18): Focused on civility in politics, this event will include a dialogue between former White House social secretaries, promoting civil engagement.

Dignity Index Workshops: Hosted by the Susquehanna Valley Mediation Center, these events will use the Dignity Index to improve communication across political divides.

Trauma-Informed Training (Sept 26): A collaboration with the Susquehanna Valley United Way to host events that integrate empathy and understanding into civic discussions.

4. Stress Management and Mental Health Resources:

The Counseling and Student Development Center will [provide resources](#) and tips to help students manage election-related stress and maintain well-being during this intense period.

5. Additional Key Events:

- September 17th Reading Group: Discussion on religious liberty in American politics.
- Constitution Day Lecture (October 21): Delivered by Professor Vincent Phillip Muñoz, exploring religious freedom and the American founding.

Conclusion

Through leadership, collaboration, and a deep commitment to civic engagement, this action plan aims to create a robust infrastructure for voter registration, education, and civil discourse leading up to the Fall 2024 elections. By utilizing the resources of TurboVote/Bison Votes, the Dignity Index, and partnerships with organizations like the League of Women Voters, the Susquehanna Valley Mediation Center, Lewisburg Downtown Partnership and the United Way, this initiative will empower the student body to be active, informed participants in the democratic process.