

#UseYourVote  
Voter Engagement Campaign 2020  
Chatham University

## **Executive Summary**

Chatham University's ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge Plan was developed by the Pennsylvania Center for Women and Politics (PCWP) at Chatham University, the Office of Student Engagement, and the Office of Student Affairs (OSA). The plan was developed to educate Chatham University students and community members in civic learning and to facilitate democratic engagement and participation.

Our voter engagement plan will be implemented across Chatham University's three campuses. In person activities will be staged at the University's main campus, where most of the undergraduate population is based. Virtual events and communications will reach across campuses.

The goal of our voter engagement plan is to increase voter engagement for the 2020 presidential election and beyond. We aim to increase voter registration as well as voter turnout on campus. The slogan of this campaign, #UseYourVote, will be branded on all efforts of the campaign including giveaway items and promotional materials. Throughout this campaign, we plan to foster greater awareness of the importance of engaging in our country's democratic processes. Widespread engagement by students, faculty, and staff will generate an increase in awareness, dialogue, and action around the election. In order to achieve this goal, we will implement a series of educational programs and civic engagement events designed to provide voter education, voter registration, and ballot access. This campaign will launch at the beginning of the Fall 2020 semester and conclude with post-election programs. However, efforts to continue to foster democratic engagement on campus will be ongoing throughout the academic year as the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has an election every spring (primary election) and every fall (general election). While we are maintaining many of the successful programs and campaigns from previous years, we are augmenting them with new opportunities (e.g. shuttle service to return ballots) and adapted plans to comply with the University's guidelines regarding physical distancing during the COVID-19 pandemic. Many programs will take place virtually or in small groups.

## **Leadership**

Dr. Heather Black, Dean of Students, Office of Student Affairs  
Dr. Dana Brown, Executive Director, Pennsylvania Center for Women and Politics  
Bill Campbell, Vice President of Marketing and Communications  
Dr. Randi Congelton, Assistant Vice President, Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion  
Emily Fidago, Director, Office of Student Engagement

Student leaders include Marianna Touloumes, President of Chatham Student Government (CSG), and Lalah C. Williams, Vice President for Student Diversity and Inclusion for Chatham Student Government.

The leadership team will work across campuses and with university partners in order to implement our engagement programs. The leadership team will be ongoing and consist of the staff and representatives of the aforementioned offices. Should personnel leave the institution, what will remain constant are the offices involved in developing and implementing programming.

## Commitment

Chatham University is a dynamic, evolving institution located in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, continuing a tradition of community engagement beginning with its founding in 1869 as the Pennsylvania Female College. Today, the University maintains a historical commitment to women's education even as we have transitioned into a co-educational institution. At the core of our mission is serving our communities and graduating engaged citizens.

Chatham University "prepares its students to build lives of purpose, value, and fulfilling work." Further, "Chatham prepares its graduates to be informed and engaged citizens in their communities; to recognize and respect diversity of culture, identity, and opinion; and to live sustainably." Chatham's mission creates an expectation for all students, and the university community, to collaboratively address issues of public concern on local and global levels.

Chatham University's commitment to democratic engagement will be demonstrated with the following actions:

- Chatham University's General Education curriculum provides courses that immerse students in Chatham's mission initiatives: Engagement and Responsibility, Sustainability and the Environment, and International and Global Understanding.
  - Students are required to take at least one mission related course that is dedicated to Engagement and Responsibility (EGE). In an "EGE" course, "students will describe constructions of race, class, gender, ethnicity, and beliefs as they apply to the topic(s) under study. Students will demonstrate the ability to advocate for their own positions through such strategies as attentiveness to the ideas and struggles of others, strong communication skills, and consensus."
- Voter registration and voter education materials will be sent to all SDE 101 classes, which is required for all first-year students.
- Voter registration and education materials will be featured as "Mission Highlights" in the University's *PULSE* Newsletters to community members both inside and outside the University. The newsletters will coincide with important election related dates (registration deadline, application for mail-in and absentee ballot deadline, and Election Day itself).
- Chatham University's President, Dr. David Finegold, has signed the ALL IN Higher Education Presidents' Commitment to Full Student Voter Participation.
- An email from the President of the University will be sent out to all campus community members on National Voter Registration Day in order to encourage voter registration and draw attention to important election dates.

- Chatham University is a proud member of Project Pericles, which is a select group of liberal arts colleges and universities that have made institutional commitments to promoting participatory citizenship and social responsibility within their students. Chatham's commitment is anchored within a committee of the Board of Trustees.

## **Landscape**

Chatham University has an enrollment of over 2,400 students across over 60 undergraduate and graduate programs in our areas of excellence: sustainability & health, business & communications, and the arts and sciences.

The Chatham University student body is comprised of over 1,400 undergraduate students and over 1,000 graduate students. Full time students make up 75.8 percent of the student body and part time students account for 24.2 percent.

### *Racial/Ethnic Diversity*

- 65.7 percent of students identify as white, non-Hispanic.
- 4.4 percent of students identify as Black or African American
- 4 percent of students identify as Hispanic/Latino
- 2.7 percent of students identify as Asian

### *Campus Political Climate*

Past campus democratic engagement efforts have closely followed presidential election cycles. Political engagement with electoral politics and voter education tends to increase in presidential and midterm election years and falls in local election years. Students stay highly engaged with political issues such as climate change and access to healthcare regardless of the year. Therefore, to encourage democratic engagement on campus, we will draw upon the connection between students' public policy interests and their democratic participation. We will ask students to "#UseYourVote" and ask them to speak out on social media and on campus about why they choose to vote and why it is important to them.

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania since the previous mid-term election cycle has implemented a "no excuse mail-in ballot" opportunity. So, in addition to educating around voting in person on Election Day, we have created communications and informational sessions to teach about how to request a mail-in ballot and how to properly vote with a mail-in ballot. As a part of our efforts, we are offering shuttles to the City-County building so students can turn in their mail-in ballot in person before Election Day.

## **Goals**

Through our voter engagement campaign, we hope to achieve both measureable and immeasurable goals. In the long-term, we strive for 100% student voter participation and to ensure that every student on campus is asked if they are registered to vote and asked to make a voting plan.

1. Encourage students to be active participants in our democracy by fostering civic learning and knowledge in democratic processes.

2. Reach every first-year student in SDE 101 with voter education materials and resources.
3. Encourage more students to be engaged in local and national elections.
4. Demonstrate that the percentage of students at Chatham University who are registered voters and who have voted in local and national elections has increased and remains above the national average. Data provided by NSLVE should help us to determine this.

### **NSLVE Data**

In 2016, NSLVE data shows us that Chatham University voting rate was higher than the national average at 64.1% with voting rates among registered students at 75.6%. Our 2016 data also showed that 84.9% of eligible students were registered while our 2018 data shows that 80.6% of eligible students were registered.

In 2016, 53.9% of 18-21-year-old students voted and 57% of 22-24-year-old students voted. The voting rate increased with every age bracket. Additionally, in 2016 there was a disparity between voting rates of First Year Students and Upperclassmen. 49.6% of First Year students voted while 61.5 percent of Upperclassmen voted. In 2016, 61.5 percent of women students voted while 50.0% of men students voted.

The NSVLE Data reinforces our goals to reach first-year students as they enter the University and ask them to register to vote and participate in the democratic process. Younger students and first year Chatham University students were less likely to vote in 2016 and therefore we must focus our attention in part on this demographic so that we can foster democratic participation throughout each students' college career.

### **Strategy**

The Office of Student Affairs and the Pennsylvania Center for Women and Politics have partnered to implement a campaign to increase voter engagement for the 2020 presidential election and beyond. The slogan of this campaign, #UseYourVote, will be branded on all efforts of the campaign including giveaway items and promotional materials.

As part of our efforts to become a Voter Friendly designated campus, we have signed on to be a part of the National Study of Learning, Voting and Engagement (NSLVE) so that we can track our student registration and voting rates. We have also agreed to be a partner for National Voter Registration Day which we plan to promote on campus. In addition, we've committed to meet the requirements of the American Democracy Project's ALL IN Challenge. We hope to enrich our voter engagement campaign through the support and guidance of these various endeavors.

### *Action Plan*

#### *Pre-Election Day Events*

- **Monday, August 24<sup>th</sup> – Monday, October 19<sup>th</sup>, Voter Registration Tabling:** We will be utilizing different tabling and promotional materials during this time to register students and remind them of the deadline to be registered to vote before the general election, which is October 19<sup>th</sup>.

- **Tuesday August 25<sup>th</sup> – Tuesday, December 1st, Hot Takes Tuesday:** Each Tuesday, the PCWP will sit down with students who want to talk about current events, politics, and the election. These will be student-led conversations that give students the opportunity to share their thoughts and ask questions.
- **Wednesday, August 26<sup>th</sup>, Women's Equity Day:** Voter registration tables will be available in the dining hall. In honor of the Women's Suffrage Centennial we will offer a watch party of "Iron Jawed Angels" following the Chatham University's COVID-19 guidelines.
- **Monday, September 14<sup>th</sup>, Absentee Ballots Info Session:** An informational session will be held to provide all students from outside of the local area with the process of receiving an absentee ballot. Students are welcome and encouraged to reach out to the PCWP with voter registration or civic engagement questions.
- **Tuesday, September 15<sup>th</sup>, Constitution Day Speaker:** Carnegie Mellon University historian, Dr. Lisa Tetrault, will give a lecture on the history of the women's suffrage movement and the activism that led to the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment in honor of Constitution Day and the Women's Suffrage Centennial.
- **Thursday, September 17<sup>th</sup>, Constitution Day:** Voter Registration will be available all day as we celebrate Constitution Day in the dining hall and other areas around campus.
- **Tuesday, September 22<sup>nd</sup>, National Voter Registration Day:** Promotional materials will be posted around campus to advertise registering on this day. We will provide registration tables in high traffic areas on campus. The President of Chatham University will send a campus wide message regarding National Voter Registration Day.
- **Tuesday, September 29<sup>th</sup>, First Presidential Debate Watch Party:** A debate watch party will be held in student centers and dorms on campus. To facilitate social distancing, we will also offer "Debate Watch Party Packs" featuring games, snacks, and promotional materials for students who want to host small gatherings in their dorms.
- **Wednesday, October 7<sup>th</sup>, Vice Presidential Debate:** A debate watch party will be held in student centers on campus for the vice presidential debate. To facilitate social distancing, we will also offer "Debate Watch Party Packs" featuring games, snacks, and promotional materials for students who want to host small gatherings in their dorms.
- **Thursday, October 15<sup>th</sup>, Second Presidential Debate Watch Party:** A debate watch party will be held in student centers and dorms on campus. To facilitate social distancing, we will also offer "Debate Watch Party Packs" featuring games, snacks, and promotional materials for students who want to host small gatherings in their dorms.
- **Wednesday October 21<sup>st</sup>, Elsie Hillman Chair in Women and Politics:** We will be virtually joined by former Governor Susana Martinez (R-NM) and former Governor Jennifer Granholm (D-MI) for a discussion of current state of politics, the upcoming election, and

their trailblazing careers in office. The governors will also speak to students in a private student reception.

- **Thursday, October 22<sup>nd</sup>, Third Presidential Debate Watch Party:** A debate watch party will be held in student centers and dorms on campus. To facilitate social distancing, we will also offer “Debate Watch Party Packs” featuring games, snacks, and promotional materials for students who want to host small gatherings in their dorms.
- **Monday, October 26<sup>th</sup>, First Year Experience Course SDE Session:** All first year students at Chatham are required to take a first year experience course. Students will discuss civic engagement and participation in elections. Students will also be provided with information about where to vote on Election Day during this session.
- **Tuesday, October 27<sup>th</sup>, Donut and Cider Table:** To draw attention to the mail-in/absentee ballot application deadline, the PCWP will be handing out free donuts and apple cider on Chatham University’s Quad.
- **Thursday, October 29<sup>th</sup>, Diversity Dialogue: Dialogue Across Political Differences:** PCWP, CSG, and ODEI will partner to teach students critical listening and communication skills to facilitate productive political conversations across ideological divides.
- **Thursday, October 29<sup>th</sup> –Tuesday, November 3<sup>rd</sup>, Shuttle to Drop Off Mail-in Ballots:** Pennsylvania residents are encouraged to drop off their mail-in ballots in person when close to Election Day, so to help Chatham University students cast their votes, we arranged a shuttle from campus to the Allegheny County drop off location on multiple dates leading up to the election.

#### *Election Day Events*

- **Tuesday, November 3<sup>rd</sup>, Election Day:** We will be turning our student center into Election Headquarters for Election Day. Activities, snacks, and novelties will be offered in the student center all day in order to energize the campus about the election. The day will culminate with a virtual election results party in the evening.

#### *Post-Election Day Event*

- **Wednesday, November 4<sup>th</sup>, PCWP Election Day Debrief:** The PCWP, ODEI, and OSA will offer a place for students to gather to talk about election night and ask questions.
- **Monday, November 9<sup>th</sup>, PCWP Post-Election Panel:** During this event, a panel of experts will discuss what happened on election night and what it will mean for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the United States moving forward. The panel will take questions from the audience and pay special attention to the role of student voters.

#### *Other Campaign Initiatives*

- **Social Media Campaign:** A social media campaign will be utilized during the months leading up to the election. Students will be encouraged by the Office of Student Affairs, the PCWP, and a coalition of student organizations, to post Snapchats, videos, pictures, tweets,

and statuses to explain why they plan to vote and/or why others should also vote. These posts will be accompanied by #UseYourVote. We will also use our university Snapchat account to create “stories” of students explaining why they plan to vote. We’ll also use this media to promote events, voter registration opportunities, and important deadlines.

- **Pledge to Vote Cards:** At all voter registration events and in the period of time between the voter registration deadline and week of the November election we will collect “Pledge to Vote” cards. Students will write down what political issues are most important to them and why they are going to vote. They will be prompted to write down what time and where they plan to vote (or if they plan on mailing their vote) and will provide their own addresses. Before Election Day, we will mail the cards back to each student as a reminder that they are invested in the election and using their votes.
- **Chatham University App Notifications:** Chatham University faculty, staff, and students are encouraged to download a smartphone app for campus news, events, and resources. We added voter resources such as links to voter registration forms to the app and sent out push notifications to all users on important dates like the Pennsylvania voter registration deadline and National Voter Registration Day.
- **Poster Campaign:** A variety of posters will be hung around campus leading up to the election. Topics covered by the posters will include how to register to vote, how to vote, and why you should vote. We also plan to have a series of posters that feature quotes from past and present notable figures about the importance of participating in democratic processes.
- **Dorm Bulletin Boards and Door Hangers:** The PCWP will provide all campus RAs with a printed bulletin board poster and door hangers to remind students of upcoming election related deadlines, and to encourage students to get help from PCWP staff if they have questions.
- **#UseYourVote Giveaways:** We will be purchasing t-shirts, buttons, stickers, facemasks, etc. to pass out to students at registration tables and other events in order to increase excitement about the campaign and upcoming election. These items will also help us to promote the election on campus.

### *Coalition*

The coalition for our campaign primarily consists of professional staff, faculty, and students who work with and for the Office of Student Affairs and the Pennsylvania Center for Women and Politics.

- *Office of Student Affairs*  
The area of civic learning and democratic engagement is housed under the Office of Student Affairs at Chatham. As such, the Office of Student Affairs provides the campus with a variety of programs and initiatives to engage students in our local community and beyond. Such

opportunities include but are not limited to the Emerging Leaders Institute, Alternative Spring Break, Chatham Student Government, monthly service opportunities, and the Bonner Leaders Program. Subsequently, all efforts related to our participation in the NASPA Lead initiative are also housed in the Office of Student Affairs.

- *Pennsylvania Center for Women and Politics*

The Pennsylvania Center for Women and Politics (PCWP) at Chatham University is a non-partisan center devoted to fostering women's public leadership through education, empowerment, and action. The first to focus on women's political involvement in Pennsylvania, the Center integrates disciplinary knowledge, civic education, and coalition building while examining the intersection of women and public policy. The Center conducts candidate and advocacy trainings, offers educational programs in applied politics, and provides timely analysis on women's issues. The Center is also home to the University's membership in Project Pericles – a select group of liberal arts colleges and universities that have made institutional commitments to promoting participatory citizenship and social responsibility.

- *Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion*

- The Office of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion strives to promote a campus environment that understands and embraces multiculturalism while increasing individuals' intercultural competence. The office is responsible for leading efforts to build and sustain a diverse and culturally vibrant campus, which promotes student success and retention.

- *Office of Marketing and Communications*

Chatham University's Office of Marketing and Communications will facilitate campus-wide communication, as well as communication with parents, staff, and alumni.

- *Chatham University Student Government*

Chatham's Student Government connects us to campus leaders from all class years and has a common goal of providing voter education and voter resources to the student body.

- *Chatham University College Democrats*

An on campus, student-run organization.

- *Chatham University Young Republicans Club*

An on campus, student-run organization

Sample Poster

CHATHAM UNIVERSITY  
PENNSYLVANIA CENTER  
FOR WOMEN & POLITICS

VOTER REGISTRATION

SIMPLE STEPS WITH A HUGE IMPACT




*Don't forget to make sure you are registered and ready to vote on November 3rd!*

**PA DEADLINE TO REGISTER:** October 19th

CHECK YOUR REGISTRATION

FIND OUT IF YOU ARE REGISTERED AND WHERE YOU ARE REGISTERED

PA Residents can [check their voter registration status](#) and [register](#) if needed at [votespa.com](#).  
Out-of-state voters should visit [nass.org/can-i-vote](#).





DECIDE HOW YOU WILL VOTE

DO YOU NEED AN ABSENTEE OR MAIL IN BALLOT?

Students can choose to vote on campus or at their permanent home address. This year, voters also have an option to mail in their ballots if they aren't eligible for an absentee ballot. Find out more information at <https://www.votespa.com/Voting-in-PA/Pages/Mail-and-Absentee-Ballot.aspx>.  
  
Absentee and mail-in ballot requests must be received by your county elections office by October 27th and completed ballots must be returned to your county elections office by Election Day.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

INFORMATION ON FIRST TIME VOTING AND PRIMARY ELECTIONS

First time voters (or voters at a new polling place) will need to show a photo ID (your student ID counts) or a non-photo ID with a name and address.



HAVE QUESTIONS?

CONTACT THE PCWP



If you have **ANY QUESTIONS** about voter registration, absentee ballots, finding your polling place, or the election, please don't hesitate to contact the PCWP at [pcwp@chatham.edu](mailto:pcwp@chatham.edu) or 412.365.1878. You can also find the most up to date information for your local election by contacting your local Elections Office, [VotesPA.com/Resources](#) → [Contact Your Local Elections Official](#)

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## **Reporting**

The Pennsylvania Center for Women and Politics at Chatham University (PCWP) will share our voter engagement plans, date and reports on our website and in emails to the campus and wider community. In the future, we will use NSLVE data to share with students Chatham University's voting and registration rates in an effort to challenge them to surpass our current rates.

## **Evaluation**

The leadership team will meet in early October 2020 again after the 2020 election to evaluate our efforts and discuss how to implement our voter engagement plan in local and midterm election years. In the October 2020 meeting we will evaluate the number of volunteers we engage for voter registration as well as the number of participants at the programs that focus on civic engagement. This mid-point review process will help us to determine if and where we need to expand our outreach and who to add to the leadership team. We may also need to further reimagine our programming efforts depending upon the COVID-19 pandemic and this mid-point review opportunity gives the flexibility to edit our plans. Moving forward we will use NSLVE data and student feedback to evaluate if we succeeded in engaging more students in the democratic process. Voter engagement and education will be ongoing at Chatham University and we will use the 2020 evaluation and feedback in our efforts during the 2021 calendar year and beyond.