

# Tusculum University 2022 Voter Friendly Plan

## Table of Contents

<b>Leadership:</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>About Tusculum University</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>Coalition</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Activities</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Top three goals for democratic engagement in Fall 2022:</b> .....	<b>4</b>
Voter Registration:.....	4
Voter Education: .....	4
Ballot Access:.....	4
VOTE: .....	4
<b>Timeline:</b> .....	<b>4</b>
August.....	5
September .....	5
October.....	5
November .....	5
December .....	5
January .....	5
February .....	5
March .....	5
April .....	5
<b>Success</b> .....	<b>5</b>

## Leadership:

Jacob I. Fait, PhD – Executive Director, Center for Civic Advancement

[jfait@tusculum.edu](mailto:jfait@tusculum.edu)

(814) 282-5788

Amanda Delbridge, MBA – Assistant Director, Center for Civic Advancement

[adelbridge@tusculum.edu](mailto:adelbridge@tusculum.edu)

(662) 321-2547

Avonlea Knode – Program Coordinator, Bonner Leadership Program

[aknode@tusculum.edu](mailto:aknode@tusculum.edu)

(423) 636-7300

## About Tusculum University

Founded in 1794, Tusculum University just celebrated its 228<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. Tusculum is the first institution of higher education in the state of Tennessee and is currently the 28<sup>th</sup> oldest in the nation. Additionally, Tusculum was the first coeducational institution affiliated with the Presbyterian Church. Ten structures on the campus are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The main campus is located in Greene County in the Appalachian Mountains with satellite campus locations in Knoxville and Morristown, TN. It is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACSCOC). TU is a small, private, co-educational, and not-for-profit institution of higher education that currently awards 30 majors, 32 minors or endorsements, and 7 masters-level degrees. The mission of Tusculum is stated as follows “building on a rich Presbyterian heritage and a pioneering spirit, Tusculum University provides an active and experiential education within a caring Christian environment to inspire civic engagement, enrich personal lives, and equip career-ready professionals.”

As of the Fall of 2021, sixty eight percent of the total 1,664 students at Tusculum University are from the Appalachian region of Eastern Tennessee, Southwest Virginia, and Western North Carolina. Of the 1,664 students, eighty one percent are undergraduates and nineteen percent are graduate students. Approximately half of Tusculum students are defined as First Generation and qualify as Pell grant-eligible.

Tusculum University continues to support Civic Engagement through the Center for Civic Advancement (CCA). In fact, in December of 2019 it was announced that Tusculum University had received the Carnegie designation for Civic Engagement.

A major program that has been developed and housed in the CCA since the last classification is the Voluntary Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program. This program is in partnership with the College of Business, Westminster Presbyterian Church, and the Washington County Library System. The goal of VITA is to complete taxes for community members for free, and it utilizes student volunteers. The success of this program is two-fold, it is because of a strong community partnership and the dedication of faculty to help students make connections between their coursework in accounting and community needs. Annually, through this program Tusculum student volunteers complete approximately 750 tax returns producing in excess a million dollars in returns to community members and a savings of over \$100,000 in tax preparation fees. The level of student involvement in community engagement activities of the CCA has significantly increased in recent years. Historically, it was mostly first-year students and Bonner Leaders who were impacted by the work of the CCA. At present, the CCA works with students from all years. One example of this change is seen in Nettie Day. Prior to 2015 Nettie Day, Tusculum's Day of Service, focused on involving first-year students only. Over the past four years, Nettie Day has increased from just under 400 participants to an average of 700 participants. The goal for Nettie Day 202 is over 800 participants and is being funded by a \$45,000 Day of Service grant. Additionally, the campus has supported this change by recessing classes on Nettie Day so all can participate. In addition to expanding Nettie Day, the CCA has also helped sponsor additional campus organizations which have a focus on civic engagement, such as, the Bonner Leader Program, and the Green Team. Further, the CCA has expanded programming to assist in the larger conversation about civic engagement on campus.

## Coalition

Who are the other team members who will be involved with the project? Example members include student leaders, deans, staffers and faculty. If not yet known, what are the academic institution's offices that will be involved? Who else in your coalition will carry leadership responsibilities in implementing the field plan? Who are your community partners?

Academic Affairs  
Bonner Leaders  
Center for Civic Advancement  
Department of Political Science  
Dr. Jacob Fait, Dean of the College of Business  
Marketing Department  
Student Affairs  
Student Dining Facilities  
Student Housing  
VITA Program

## Activities

During the welcome back week, the third week in August the aforementioned coalition will begin with voter education and registration activities. All of the aforementioned coalition members have signed on to do their part in this endeavor.

Voter Education events will include:

- Debate Parties hosted by the Center for Civic Advancement
- Registration Parties hosted by the Center for Civic Advancement
- Registration Booths hosted by CCA & Student Affairs
- Voter education activities in the cafeteria
- Voter Education Social Media Campaign

Bonner Leaders will be taking a large part in the planning of these activities and working the registration booth. Additionally, the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program has volunteered to donate laptops to be used at the voter registration booth outside of the cafeteria.

## Top three goals for democratic engagement in Fall 2022:

- Increase the number of students on campus registered to vote
- Increase the number of students who vote
- Expand COALITION partners for future years

### Voter Registration:

- Register incoming freshman during freshman processing such as orientation
- Send out a campus-wide email with registration information
- Registration information on campus media
- Have registration stations on campus to allow students to register

### Voter Education:

- Campus media explaining importance of voting
- Hosting a debate viewing party
- Involve political science majors and/or debate club in importance of voting project
- Invite a local politician to lecture on campus

### Ballot Access:

- Absentee voting will be encouraged
- Transportation from campus to the polls will be provided

### VOTE:

- Pledge to vote cards
- E-mail reminder to vote
- Posters, 4 walls marketing and social media
- University transportation to the polls

## Timeline:

## August

Collaboration and welcome back planning with Coalition members  
Collaboration with Student Affairs on registration dates  
Collaboration with department of political science on education events  
Coordinate cafeteria booth  
Coordinate borrowing lap-tops from VITA program  
Coordinate Constitution Day activities

## September

Voter education events  
Voter registration table  
Debate watch parties

## October

Voter education events  
Voter registration table  
Debate watch parties

## November

Voter education events  
Voter registration table  
Debate watch parties

## December

Analysis of results. At this point we will analyze all data possible knowing that the NSLVE survey data will be forthcoming.

## January

Begin writing next semester's Voter Friendly Report.  
Collaboration and welcome back planning with Coalition members

## February

Local voter education events

## March

Local voter education events

## April

Local voter education events  
Finalize Voter Friendly Report

## Success

Tusculum University registered for the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement. This survey enables us to compare the results from previous election data in order to have input data in strengthening our approach for future years. The most recent NSLVE 2020 report shows that of the 1,400 eligible student voters, 1,145 are registered to vote for a total registration rate of 82% with a 56% voting rate for the entire student body. Furthermore, the NSLVE report also indicates that from 2016 to 2020 registration rates and the voting rates have gone up 6% and 15% respectively. Additionally, we will be able to

measure the number of students that register to vote through TurboVote. This raw data comparison to prior years will help us in determining achievement of the top three goals for democratic engagement in Fall of 2022.