



## **FINAL CAMPUS REPORT**

### **Institutional Leadership:**

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### **Overview:**

**West Chester University had several goals to carry out democratic engagement in 2016, including:**

- To register as many students as possible.
- To empower students to turn out to vote.
- To engage as many faculty, staff, and students as possible in our democratic engagement efforts, which include volunteering to register voters, educating voters, and participating in programming.

### **Did your campus meet these goals? Why or why not?**

YES! WCU's institutional leadership considered this a successful endeavor that exceeded expectations.

However, to have a full understanding of the results of the campus plan the leadership team feels that it is imperative to view and analyze the plan with the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement data.

### **Coalition:**

**The following departments and organizations were involved in the coalition:**

Academic Affairs: Department of English, Department of Political Science, Women and Gender Studies, Department of Social Work and Graduate Social Work, Department of Communication Studies, Honors College, Youth Empowerment and Urban Studies, Library, Department of Nutrition, Department of Marketing

Student Affairs: Residential Life, Fraternity and Sorority Life, Student Activities Council, Women's Center, Office of Service-Learning and Volunteer Programs, New Student Programs, Student Government

Association, Athletics, Office of Multicultural Affairs, Office of Wellness Promotions, registered student organizations

Community Organizations: League of Women Voters, Your Vote is Your Voice

**How did your coalition function throughout the fall semester? Why was your coalition effective or not effective? How will it change for continued Democratic Engagement work; particularly focused on mid-term elections?**

During the second week of August Dr. Chris Stangl and Mrs. Jodi Roth-Saks hosted a Voter Engagement Committee meeting for faculty and staff interested in mobilizing the student body. Work groups met later in the semester to work on programming. Student leader, Aileen Assumma, regularly checked in with faculty, staff, and students who committed to participating in voter engagement activities. Faculty, student organizations, athletic teams, and departments took shifts at a voter engagement table for 7 weeks leading up to the November election. Tables were hosted 3 days a week for 2 hours at a time. Through word of mouth the committee received emails from more students, faculty and staff wanting to get involved or volunteer. This engagement project has helped in making the campus much more involved with voting and voter engagement, it has provided the campus with a new found excitement for this type of civic duty. The voter engagement efforts, which started in January of 2016 are a stepping stone for democratic engagement work at WCU. Since the election a google document including ways to stay involved in civic engagement and advocacy work, has been circulating campus. Students are adding opportunities, as well as campus departments. Students that volunteered in this campus wide effort have continued to attend these programs, write to political figures, voice concern about political appointments, and continued to be engaged through the Office of Service-Learning and Volunteer Programs. Moving forward, in spring 2017 the Voter Engagement Committee, as well as administrators and students, will be invited to a meeting to review the results from the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement. Attendees will be asked to make suggestions about future voter education and engagement efforts. The suggestions will be added to WCU's campus plan for voter engagement and education, which will be revisited for the mid-term election. Because of Voter Friendly Campus and Campus Election Engagement Project the department of Service-Learning and Volunteer Programs is now equipped with a plan of action, as well as a process for recruiting student leaders and federal work study students to assist with implementing the plan. This student support is both capacity building and a way to use a peer to peer network to influence students to participate in voter education and voter registration efforts.

**Analysis of your work:**

**For campus plans, we asked you to cover how you planned on fulfilling the four buckets of work for a well-rounded democratic engagement. Please describe how each of these programs were actualized, if they were successful, and what you learned.**

- **Voter registration: How did your campus register students? How many students did you register?**
- **Voter education: How did you provide students nonpartisan voting information?**
- **Ballot access: How did you make sure students had access to the ballot? What were the advantageous and hurdles to students at your institution having access to the ballot?**
- **Voter turnout: How did you encourage your students to vote on or before Election Day?**

**Voter registration:**

- In July over 900 students registered to vote using TurboVote during Summer Orientation Part 1
- During Summer Orientation Part 2 in August a text message with a link to TurboVote was sent to all incoming first year and transfer students
- During Summer Orientation Part 2 Aileen gave a 5 minute presentation to all 2,500 incoming students about the importance of voter registration, how to register, and how to find their polling location
- The Vice President of Student Affairs sent out 2 emails to the “all students” lists including voter registration information
- The University President, Chris Fiorentino sent out an email to the “all students” list including voter registration information
- The first week of school a student leader hosted several tables in front of the dining hall with voter registration information and iPads so that students could register on the spot
- The Off Campus Commuter Students Association canvased student neighborhoods by handing out welcome bags, which included voter registration information, for both community members and students
- The Ram’s Eye View (student handbook) was updated in August to include voter registration information and a link to TurboVote
- Voter registration information was added to the Stall Street Journal, which hangs in bathrooms throughout campus
- Student Leaders hosted tables throughout campus on National Voter Registration Day, which included voter registration information, registration through TurboVote, polling location information, and non-partisan candidate guides.
- Voter registration was added to the Service-Learning and Volunteer Programs website
- Information was given out at the Annual Volunteer Fair and Involvement Fair
- Faculty were asked to email students the link to TurboVote
- The IT department was contacted about adding a link to TurboVote on the university homepage and D2L
- Digital ads with the link to voter registration were added to all televisions around campus
- Tables were hosted throughout the fall semester by different clubs and organizations three days a week for two hours at a time to register students

## **2. Voter education:**

- Student Leaders and volunteers hung up voter registration posters throughout campus
- Polling Location information circulated on the digital televisions around campus
- A video about why WCU students vote and how to register circulated on the campus televisions every hour, every day for the entire semester
- A video about Voter Registration circulated on campus televisions every hour, every day for the entire semester
- Your Vote: Know Before You Go, sponsored by the Women’s Center, Office of Service-Learning and Volunteer Programs, Departments of Political Science, Women and Gender Studies, Graduate Social Work, and English department took place September 26. A panel comprised of five University professors discussed Reproductive Rights, Family Leave, LGBTQ+ Rights, Pay Equity, and Affordable Tuition through a non-partisan lens. To close the event, Student Leader Ellie spoke about Voter registration through TurboVote, and the “Dub C Votes” cards.
- The student leaders on the committee partnered with Honors Student Association for two Debate Watches on campus on September 26<sup>th</sup> and October 19<sup>th</sup>. Information on polling locations, non-partisan candidate guides, and “Dub C Votes” cards were distributed to all in attendance.

- Student leaders designed an insert including the link to VotesPA.com, for students to find their polling location, and instructions for signing up for text reminders. Student leaders inserted containing polling location information into all napkin holders at Lawrence Dining Hall.
- The library blog and Office of Service-Learning and Volunteer Programs website were utilized for voter education.
- The school newspaper, “The Quad” put the non-partisan candidate guides in one of their issues leading up to Election Day.
- The school newspaper, “The Quad” ran two articles about voter registration and engagement on campus, these articles were written by Ellie and Aileen.
- The on campus radio had their hosts read a tag line after every show throughout the Months of October and November.
- A display was set up in the Sykes Student Union.
- A display was set up on the second floor of Lawrence Center, focusing on voter education and voter identity.
- Twitter and Facebook pages were created specifically for voter engagement and voter education at WCU and were regularly utilized. The campus social media staff committed to retweeting and sharing our posts.
- Student leaders hosted a major voter education push, which took place on October 26. The event, “Donut Forget to Vote” hosted tables across campus distributing voter education information. Information included non-partisan CEEP presidential and Pennsylvania Senate candidate guides, CEEP Supreme Court ruling guides, sample ballots, local precinct maps, polling location handouts for students living on campus and in nearby off campus areas, flyers promoting our Election Day shuttle, “Dub C Votes” cards, pins with “Donut Forget to Vote” written on them, and munchkin donuts. Volunteers passed along resources, and looked up students’ polling locations via their phones using VotesPA.com.

### **3. Ballot access:**

- Student leaders were at the polling location on campus to assist students who were at the wrong polling location. They gave out directions and transportation information to the appropriate polling location.
- Student leaders enlisted an Election Day Volunteer team to serve at the polling location on campus. They assisted with crowd control, serving proxy in line for short breaks, and directing students at the wrong polling location to Ellie Sullum and Aileen Assumma. Approximately four to six volunteers covered these responsibilities every hour during Election Day.
- Stangl and Roth-Saks requested and received funding to assist with organizing transportation to the off campus polling locations. A shuttle ran from South Campus Apartments to the Hillsdale Elementary School polling location throughout Election Day.
- Student leaders, with the assistance of student organizations, hosted voter engagement/education tables in the Sykes Student Union, Science Center, dining hall, library, and other heavily trafficked areas of campus throughout the fall semester. At the tables students could register, learn about candidates, find their polling location, make a plan for Election Day, gain information about transportation to the polls, etc.

### **Get out the vote:**

- See #4 above.
- The University President, Chris Fiorentino sent out a reminder email to students the night before Election Day, with information about local polling locations, the shuttle bus and encouragement to embrace the power of your vote
- Posters were hung across campus, and campus TVs were utilized to publicize upcoming elections and how to cast a ballot

- Students were encouraged to plan in advance where and when they went to vote. Student leaders pushed good time management. “Know before You Go Cards” were circulated across campus, including steps to creating a plan to get to the polls on Election Day.
- Student Leader Ellie Sullum worked with Jennifer Yost, Assistant Director of New Student Programs, about collaborating with Residence Hall Associations across campus on voter engagement events and programming. On October 24<sup>th</sup>, she attended the RHA General Assembly, and spoke to executive boards about possibilities for collaboration and programming. She has followed up with action items for dorm events.
- Student Leader Aileen Assumma worked with Michael Diaz President of Graduate Student Association. He had both student leaders, Lambda Alpha Upsilon Fraternity and The Latino American Student Organization plan and facilitate a non-partisan issues forum that took place on November 7<sup>th</sup>. Aileen Assumma created a presentation discussing a variety of issues related to the upcoming election that was shared at the issues forum.
- On campus precinct maps were created and circulated across campus, which included a local precinct map on the front, and a list of on-campus polling locations on the back.
- Off campus precinct maps were created and circulated across campus, which include a local precinct map on the front, and the link to VotesPA.com.
- An ad was placed in the campus newspaper with voter education and registration information and transportation details
- Student leader Ellie Sullum wrote an article for the student newspaper, focusing on voter identity and continued engagement in the political process.
- Throughout the semester, hundreds of “Dub C Votes “cards were collected. Students wrote why they chose to vote, with a promise of freedom of speech and nondisclosure. These cards were turned into multiple murals, and hung across campus on Election Day.
- On the eve of Election Day, sidewalks outside of dorms were decorated with directions to students’ polling location; other parts had messages such as “Go Vote!” Student Leaders assembled a sidewalk chalk crew full of student volunteers.
- Along with the murals, bulletins were hung across campus on Election Day, encouraging students to pin their polling receipts and sign their name.
- Student leaders decorated the shuttle as well.
- On Election Day, students voting on campus were given “Dub C Votes” stickers after voting. They were encouraged to take a picture and post/tweet using #DubCVotes, and to share why voting is important to them.

### **Successes:**

#### **What are your institution's top successes (up to 3) of your democratic engagement efforts in 2016?**

- Programming – Voter education at the Trump rally, Know Before you Go, National Voter Registration Day, Debate Watch, and Donut Forget to Vote had huge turnouts. The local county newspaper, “The Daily Local” wrote a piece on National Voter Registration Day, getting our success and engagement out to the community
- Coalition of faculty and staff dedicated to continuing this work
- Election day volunteers who assisted students, removing barriers to voting

### **Barriers:**

#### **What are your institution's barriers (up to 3) faced in implementing democratic engagement work in 2016?**

- WCU is a very large campus, 16,000 students, making it difficult to engage everyone.

- This was a new initiative on campus. Therefore the committee was learning, growing, and problem solving throughout the process.
- On Election Day at the campus polling location we had a traffic jam with long lines. The physical space was difficult to maneuver. The committee will be approaching the university about moving the polling location to a more assessable space.

### **Beyond 2016:**

**Local and state elections, legislative issues, and other democratic engagement activities should take place year round. Looking into 2017 and future years, how do you plan on continuing to engage and education students about the democratic process?**

- The civic engagement google doc – The committee leaders have created an ongoing google doc, which all students can access providing them with a list of events and activities or actions they can take post-election, there is an equal mix of material providing a well round list, where all students no matter where they stand can find something pertaining to them. Through this list we are able to encourage students to continue their work in civic engagement on and off campus.
- WCU has created a new campus plan for voter engagement. Student leaders supported by faculty and staff will use the plan to engage students on a regular basis.
- Creating a plan for engagement. We can now work backwards from Election Day, we have contacts, resources, materials and examples all of which can help in duplicating and improving our efforts on campus.

### **NSLVE Data:**

**When you receive your campuses’ NSLVE report, what plans are in place with your coalition to evaluate this data and to assess future initiatives?**

The Voter Engagement Committee, as well as administrators, faculty and students, will be invited to a meeting to review the results from the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement. Attendees will be asked to make suggestions about future voter education and engagement efforts. The suggestions will be added to WCU’s campus plan for voter engagement and education, which will be revisited for the mid-term election.

### **Photos and Stories:**

**Share your favorite photos and stories with us from the election!**



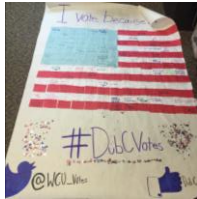
Members of Alpha Phi Omega registering students to vote on National Voter Registration Day.



The packed room at the panel discussion, “Your Vote, Know Before You Go” on campus



The Election Night Watch Party featuring the Director of the Office of Service-Learning & Volunteer Programs, Jodi Roth-Saks & the two Student Leaders, Ellie Sullum & Aileen Assumma



An example of one of the murals created with the Dub C Votes Cards hung around campus during the Fall Semester



A West Chester Student at the Donut Forget to Vote event filling out a Dub C Votes card after looking up her polling location



One of the Student Leaders, Aileen Assumma speaking about voter engagement at the President's Address



Members of the Japan club calling over other students to come and register to vote at one of the weekly tabling locations



One of the Stall Seat Journals that are in every bathroom stall across campus, with a section encouraging students to register to vote