



All In Campus Democracy Challenge



Wilmington
College



Executive Summary

The mission of Wilmington College is to educate, inspire and prepare each student for a life of service and success.

To fulfill that mission, Wilmington College provides a high quality undergraduate and graduate educational environment shaped by the traditions of the liberal arts, career preparation and the distinctive practices of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers). By offering academic programs, practical experience and co-curricular activities in a variety of settings to students from diverse backgrounds, the College leads students to gain an awareness of the world, to acquire knowledge of career and vocation and to seek truth and social justice.

Wilmington College is rooted in historic Quaker values, also known as testimonies, which include integrity, service, stewardship, equality, peace and social justice and respect for all persons. These historic testimonies motivate those who learn and work at the College to make positive contributions to their professions and their communities. – excerpt Wilmington College Mission Statement.

The following action plan will exemplify the communal efforts of Wilmington College (WC) as the college attempts to increase voter awareness and participation amongst its student body.

This type of voting initiative is not new to the campus, WC has an extensive history of social activism and voting drives have been a part of that. For the past few years, the Center for Service and Civic Engagement has been at the helm of voting awareness efforts at WC and has partnered with various other offices on campus.

With the support of the President and campus administration of Wilmington College officially merged with OAC Votes and joined the ALL-IN Campus Democracy Challenge during the Spring of 2020 WC. Wilmington College is excited to partner with the other OAC institutions. The college has recently applied to become a part of the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE)

Prior to this Wilmington College has not been a part of NSLVE and therefore WC is not able to provide recent student-voter data. Looking ahead the College plans to remain engaged with the OACVotes and NSLVE with the intention of growing and expanding its on-campus voter engagement program and efforts from this point forward.



Leadership



The Center for Service and Civic Engagement (CSCE) serves as the central point of the contact when it comes to student voting initiatives registration. The office is under the leadership of the Director of Service and Civic Engagement, has formed a campus-wide working group (WC Votes Steering Committee) focused on engaging students in the voting process. This committee is a non-partisan group of individuals comprised of Faculty, Staff, Administrative and Student partners from the WC community.

The WC Votes Steering Committee:

Chip Murdock (Chair) – Dir. of Service and Civic Engagement; Dir. of Diversity & Inclusion
Michael Allbright – Associate Vice President for Student Affairs
Stacey Conley – Asst. Dir of Athletics, Advisor Student Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC)
Eric Dick – Athletic Trainer & Asst. Professor of Athletics
Jenna Fawcett – Student Leadership Executive Board
Connor Heck – WC Student Government Association
Alecia Kemp – SAAC Representative
Russell Kincaid – Professor of Mathematics
Vicki Baker-McFarlane – Account Resolution Coordinator
Christina Murdock – Manager of Admission Operations Admission
Ariana Riccardi – President, WC Peace Corp Prep Program, FCNL Advocacy Organizer
Michael Snarr – Professor of Political Science
Brandon Tumlin – President, WC Black Student Initiative

The newly formed WC Votes Steering Committee coordinated programming through several meetings and email communication. The group was also tasked with personally promoting the efforts of WC Votes, by word of mouth, social media and by wearing issued apparel (t-shirts) on specific days. The team will be maintained as a standing committee with scheduled meetings throughout the academic year.



Commitment

Throughout its existence as an institution, Wilmington College has always displayed a commitment to civic engagement. The core values of WC along with Quaker Testimonies allude to community involvement, integrity and social justice. These concepts are congruent to healthy voter engagement.

Institutional support has been evident through the establishment and funding of the Center for Service and Civic Engagement. Various campus organizations and leaders have expressed their support of voter engagement efforts. Organizations represented include the Student Government Association, WC Honors Program, Black Student Initiative, Peace Corps Prep Program, WC Pride, Faith in Action WC Peace Resource Center and Campus Ministries to name a few.

WC Votes has contacted the Office of the President at Wilmington College and requested that it endorse the efforts and formally participate in the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge by signing the President Commitment, however Wilmington College is currently in the midst of searching and selecting a new president, and the interim president has not yet made the formal commitment.



Wilmington College is structured like many small independent liberal arts college, however its culture is quite different than many other institutions. By nature, Wilmington's governance structure lends itself to student empowerment, given the Quaker's affinity for the consensus model of decision making and institutional equality. To go along with their quaker traits, Wilmington is dedicated to its passion for a hands-on learning experience for its students. Students are offered many different avenues of practical application – learning by doing, inside and outside of the classroom. Students are told that have the ability to change the world and are challenged to be hands-on, act and build our tomorrow.



This campus-wide mindset lends itself to students being afforded opportunities to engage in activities that have both direct and indirect influences on their democratic engagement. For years several academic area, departments, and student organizations, have displayed their commitment to exposing students to the importance of civic engagement. Students are often placed in positions of leadership regarding these opportunities.

WC's Political Science Department offers a number of study abroad programs, internships in Washington, D.C., research opportunities and lobbying activities including it's annual Spring Lobbying Trips in conjunction with the FCNL (Friends Committee on National Legislation). The Agricultural Dept has two lobbying trips to Washington DC each year. The Office of Diversity and Inclusion conducts two different trips of its own annually, both focused on history and civil/human rights.

These are just a few examples of what is offered to the students of WC. However, each of these experiences serve as moments of enlightenment and empowerment for those who participate. Students often translate this energy into an appreciation for the power of the vote.

While this is an encouraging fact about the student experience at WC, only a handful of students (approximately 20%) take part in the aforementioned events.

To increase democratic engagement amongst the student body, WC Votes was quite active this election season with its outreach efforts.

Strategies

In an effort to make an immediate impact on increasing voter interest, a variety of voter registration and voter education strategies and action steps were implemented by WC Votes The spring and fall of 2020.

2020 Actions steps by Wilmington College:

- Merged with the OAC Votes and the ALL IN Democracy Challenge
- Applied to participate in the NSLVE
- Established WC Votes initiative and steering committee
- Created a WC Votes visual presence (signage and logos) via
- Utilized Voter Registration/Education Tables
- Received and utilized a \$1,000 mini grant from the Campus Vote Project
- Received employed and two fellowship positions for voter engagement
- Created a voter registration video featuring WC students and WC staff
- Purchased "Ask Me How to Vote" t-Shirts for distribution various individuals
- Initiated a voter registration competition among its athletic teams
- Purchased WC Votes promotional materials (see figures 1-3)
- Conducted various voter registration activities.
- Launched campaigns recognizing Constitution Day, National Voter Registration Day and Vote Early Day.
- Hosted non-partisan watch parties for the Presidential and VP debates
- Will host a campus-wide presidential election watch party



Short-Term

- Continue current programming that relates to awareness and outreach.
- Increase the campus visibility of the Center of Service and Civic Engagement.
- Provide voter registration opportunities during WC Orientation and Welcome Week
- Learn more about the Campus Election Engagement Project and research funding for a CEEP Fellowship, and possible CEEP grants.
- Merge efforts with various academic departments on campus in an attempt to promote and increase awareness Collaborate with diverse student organizations to increase awareness among our under-represented student populations
- Establish both an internal and external web presence for voter engagement on the campus website
- Promote civic engagement awareness during our First Year Experience courses
- Begin to gather quantitative metrics and information regarding student voter participation.
- Create an informal student survey to gauge voter interest and engagement among the student body
- Pursue a campus funded HAAS Grant for a student to assist the CSCE with voter engagement research
- Promote WC Votes campus-wide in an attempt to establish brand familiarity
- Collaborate with the panhellenic community and promote voter awareness among the Greek community
- Develop a student-led civic engagement team
- Solicit partnership with WC's Educational Theater Company to develop scripts and perform on campus
- Increase social media presence of WC Votes

Long Term

- Display increased student voter participation every two years
- Continue to provide opportunities for voter registration year-round
- Enhance voter engagement programming pertaining to local elections
- Establish WC Votes as a standing organization and brand
- Remain engaged with OAC Votes and increase our participation
- Increase our knowledge base and breadth of resources regarding voter engagement
- Obtain a standing CEEP Fellow and pursue other opportunities
- Solicit partnership with WC's Educational Theater Company to develop scripts and perform in the surrounding community of Wilmington to promote voter awareness.
- Create a Civic Corner presence and concept both on campus within various the city of Wilmington.
- Host candidate forums on campus.

Evaluation, Assessment and Reporting

Up to now Wilmington College has not collected any consistent data regarding student voter engagement, however going forward WC has every intention of increasing its efforts to do so. Once we receive feedback from NSLVE, Wilmington College be in a position to gauge and monitor student registration numbers. Once that is established, WC will report data as it pertains to both the presidential and mid term election cycles. Voting information will be collected and reported as is pertain to various constituencies. Examples of student engagement data will include information from (but may not be limited to) the following demographics:

Absentee Voters

Gender

Race/Ethnicity

Class Standing



Wilmington
College

1870 Quaker Way
Wilmington, OH 45177

937-382-6661
www.wilmington.edu

