

Wittenberg Campus Action Plan, by Professor Staci Rhine, Department of Political Science, [srhine@wittenberg.edu](mailto:srhine@wittenberg.edu)

We will have two goals to begin making Wittenberg University a Voter Friendly Campus.

- 1) Voter Registration
- 2) Voter Education

We will register students to vote in the fall for the November 2024 election. We will use a mix of paper and online registration. For students who are residents of Ohio, they can now register online. This spring some students started this process by setting up a table outside the dining hall. They checked out a laptop from the library for students to use. They did register some students but also faced limited interest in advance of the Ohio primary election. We expect greater interest in the fall. We also will provide links that explain voter registration in the 50 states for out-of-state students. We will make a concerted effort to register through National Voter Registration Week, October 7-11, 2024. <https://votereducationweek.org/> (October 7 is the deadline to register to vote in Ohio for the November election.)

Our second goal is voter education. Students, staff, and faculty will educate fellow students, staff, and faculty about voter registration deadlines, the issues on the ballot, and the races on the ballot. The efforts will be nonpartisan.

The Political Science Department, and faculty panels more generally, will offer a series of colloquia and brown bags in the fall. We have scheduled an interdisciplinary analysis of the 2024 election on September 25. Thus far faculty from Sociology, History, Communication and Digital Media and Political Science have committed to the panel. The other sessions before the November election will cover a range of election topics, including gerrymandering and voter suppression. (Ohio may have a new voter initiative to update our previous efforts to limit gerrymandering. The group is still collecting signatures for this.) The session after the election will have comparative politics specialists discuss world reactions to the results. We would also like students to be involved as both organizers and participants in these sessions. We will ask about their interests and questions about the elections. Would they like to organize a student-only session? Would they like to lead a session with faculty support? What issues do they want addressed in a forum?

I am teaching my "Campaigns and Elections" course in the fall. Students are required to volunteer 12 hours for an election activity of their choice. The class students will be the first to organize voter registration and education. But we hope to pull other students into these efforts.

Numerous groups have indicated a willingness to work as partners on this project. Student Development has committed to this. Thus far, Jade Jones, Mellie Derry and Madison Green in Student Development have offered to help.

Joi Garrett Scales, the Assistant Dean for Diversity, Inclusion & Belonging, also the Director of the William A. McClain Center for Diversity, will be a partner. I hope to reach underrepresented students through her and the Center.

The library and Kristen Peters will be partners. Kristen Peters has provided information on the library website. <https://wittenberg.libguides.com/c.php?g=1401284&p=10368191> We will update this in the fall, including calls to work at the polls. I talked to the Clark County Board of Elections, and their most pressing need is election-day workers. Unfortunately, you must be registered in the county where you work. But some students might be eligible for this opportunity.

Kim Creasap is the director of the Susan Hirt Hagen Center for Civic and Urban Engagement. She and her team are interested in supporting this project. Over the longer term, they might be able to provide continuity during the lull in electoral activity.

Rob Baker in the Political Science department is running a complementary project between the university and the Springfield community called the Civic Education Series for Informed Citizenship. This will directly link Wittenberg with Springfield residents. Depending on the timing of the sessions, students, staff, and faculty will be invited to these as well.

I would like to designate a group of students to run a social media campaign to reach and educate their fellow students in the fall. They might be drawn from my class or from any of these partners above.

I talked to Alexis Crosby this spring about the Democracy Fellow Program. I will propose this program first to students registered for my Campaigns and Elections course. But if class students have limited time or interest in this, I will expand to the other groups above to find involved students.

Thanks for your time in supporting these worthy efforts.