



**Voter
Education &
Engagement
ACTION PLAN - 2024**



Where
thought
leads.

Executive Summary

Wofford College is a national, liberal-arts college located in the upstate of South Carolina. As an institution, Wofford prides itself on cultivating students prepared for “lives of fulfillment, effective citizenship, and service to others” who “will be ever sensitive to the duties and responsibilities of good citizenship and render effective leadership and generous service to the communities in which they live” (adapted from the Goals and Purpose of the College).

This Voter Engagement & Education Plan represents a deep and abiding commitment to the Purpose and Goals of Wofford College and to bedrock principles of liberal education: good citizenship and stewardship of our communities and nation.

This action plan is centered on the 2024 national and state election, but includes additional long-term goals and strategies. It seeks to cultivate meaningful engagement with the democratic process throughout the campus community through a variety of media, including in-person events, individual assistance, and virtual opportunities.

Wofford Votes is coordinated by staff in the Division of Campus Life and Student Development and led by an inter-factional steering committee. This plan was developed by the two program coordinators who represent different communities on campus and will be evaluated and updated by the full steering committee throughout the election cycle.

Leadership

Campus Steering Committee

Mr. Seth Flanagan, *Director of Inclusive Engagement / Wofford
Votes Coordinator*

Ms. Ali Jobst, *Assistant Director of Student Activities, Wofford Votes*

Coordinator Dr. James Stukes, *Assistant Dean of Student Success, Wofford*

Votes Coordinator Mr. Brian Lemere, *Associate Dean of Students, Wofford*

Votes Coordinator Vacant, *Faculty*

Mr. Matt Myers, *Student Government*

Representative Vacant, *Student Athlete Advisory*

Council **Community Partners**

John Baucom, *Director of Registrations & Elections – Spartanburg County*

Program Coordinator

Brian Lemere

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Landscape

Civic engagement and community-mindedness are two values at the heart of Wofford’s mission and practice. At Wofford, students are encouraged to engage within our campus and outside of our gates – in clubs aimed at social change, in local organizations working for the better good, and through the political process.

Situated in downtown Spartanburg, the College is within walking distance to the nearest elections board office and located at a hub of political activity in the state. As an early voting state in presidential primaries, South Carolina receives extra attention from presidential hopefuls in election years and off-years. This provides the Wofford community with ample opportunities to engage with candidates and leaders of all statures. Through this action plan and the resulting efforts, it is the hope of the College to return a primary focus to democratic engagement.

Progress

In 2015, the College created the WoffordVotes initiative to improve the troubling statistics for student participation in the democratic process. In light of these efforts, voter registration and participation increased between the 2012 and 2016 elections, between the 2014 and 2018 midterm elections, and dramatically improved between 2016 and 2020.

In 2016, Wofford participated in the inaugural “SoCon Votes” challenge, receiving recognition for a thorough action plan and high marks for voting improvements. In 2017, the College was recognized as a Voter Friendly Campus. The College was awarded Bronze Seals from the ALL IN Democracy Challenge in 2017 and 2019. In 2021 the College was awarded the Gold Seal from ALL IN and was recognized as the SoCon champion for both voter registration and participation. The College was also recognized with the 2022 Bronze for mid year elections.



Data & Goals

Data

Prior to the formation of the WoffordVotes initiative, voter registration and participation reached a low point in 2014. The voter registration rate fell to 69.1% and the overall voting rate was an abysmal 9%. The 2016 election cycle saw increases in registration and voting rates – even over data from the 2012 cycle. Since 2016, the voter registration rate has remained above average.

Registration Rate

2016 – 82.4%

2018 – 75%

2020 – 93.4%

2022 – 78.8%

Overall Voting Rate

2016 – 50.1%

2018 – 22.8%

2020 – 75.5%

2022 – 27%

Goals

Note: Goals were finalized by the steering committees of 2022 and 2024.

- + Maintain voter registration rate above 90% for the 2022 election cycle
- + Increase overall voter participation rate to at least 80% by the 2024 election cycle
- + Engage academic departments as partners in voter registration/engagement efforts for Fall 2024
- + Provide access to voter registration opportunities for all incoming students

Strategy

Voter Education

- + Maintain a voter information hub on the Wofford website; Include more links to registration, absentee, and voting information for each state
- + Partner with third-party organizations (League of Women Voters, Rock the Vote, All In Challenge) to promote civic engagement on campus
- + Disseminate relevant voter information to all students through email and social media monthly
- + Partner with relevant student organizations (College Republicans, College Democrats, Wofford Libertarians, etc.) to provide information to students

Voter Registration

- + Provide voter registration information to ALL first-year students in their FYI course
- + Provide voter registration information for faculty to distribute in their courses
- + Host voter two campus-wide voter registration drives in the month of September
- + Include voter registration information in campus-wide communications
- + Regularly promote voter registration in daily campus announcements
- + Offer and aggressively market assistance with voter registration – staffed by members of the Division of Campus Life & Student Development

Voter Turnout

- + Use daily announcements, social media, and campus-wide emails to remind students of registration and absentee deadlines
- + Provide email reminders to students about relevant dates and deadlines
- + Assist students with obtaining mail-in ballots or early voting options provided by their state elections board
- + Assist local students with procuring transportation to the polls as needed
- + Offer and aggressively market assistance with voter issues – staffed by members of the Division of Campus Life & Student Development

Long-term

- + Add voter registration and education materials to the FYI 101 curriculum
- + Create a centralized voter assistance program to assist students with registration issues, gaining ballot access, and ensuring protection of voter rights
- + Train all members of the Campus Life & Student Development staff on best practices for voter registration, education, and engagement activities

Reporting & Evaluation

How will the plan and data be shared?

The Voter Education and Engagement Plan will be made available to all members of the Wofford community through publication on the Wofford Votes webpage. Members of the community will be directed to the plan through campus-wide emails and other communications regarding these efforts. Voter engagement data is shared with the campus community after each NSLVE report is received through email messages, news stories, etc.

How will this plan be used to execute student voting coalition work on

campus? Continued campus-wide publication of the plan and NSLVE data will allow students to view all of the necessary information at any time. The steering committee will be available to students as well for regular consultation and advice.

What data will be used to evaluate efforts?

In addition to NSLVE data, the steering committee will assess efforts in real time through participant surveys and general quantitative/demographic information of participants. We will explore the use of campus climate surveys with the office of institutional research.

What are the metrics of success? How will they be evaluated?

The primary metrics of success are the data included in the biennial NSLVE reports. These outcomes will go beyond registration and voting rates and consider individual growth and development.