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Voter Education & Engagement

MASTER PLAN

WOFFORD COLLEGE

429 N. Church Street | Spartanburg, SC 29303

Wofford College

Voter Education and Engagement Plan

Campus Contact:

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Voter Education and Engagement Steering Committee:

Roberta Bigger, *Dean of Students & VP of Student Affairs*

Dr. David Alvis, *Associate Professor of Government*

Allen Lollis, *Assistant Director of Residence Life*

Students to be selected September 2018

Community Partners:

Spartanburg Republican Party

Spartanburg Democratic Party

Spartanburg County Board of Voter Registration and Elections

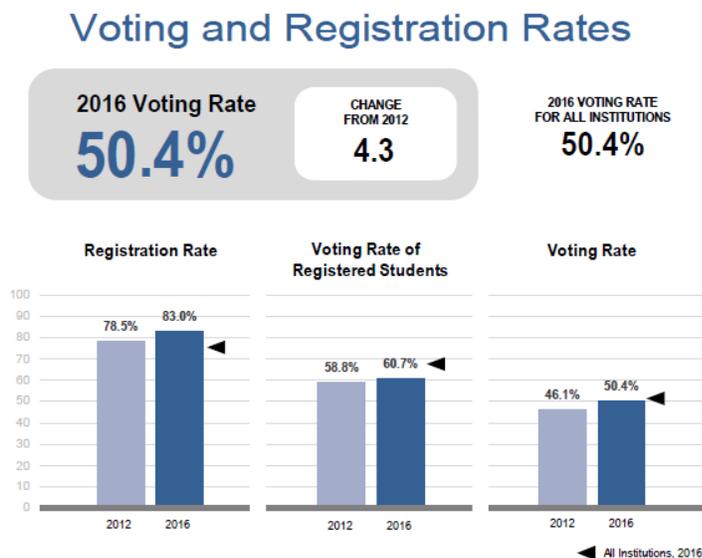
League of Women Voters

CONTEXT & PURPOSE:

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 [who will] render effective leadership and generous service to the communities in which they live.” (*adapted from the Goals and Purpose of the College*)

In the 2014 Midterm Elections, however, only 9% of eligible students cast ballots – 6% less than the average for private colleges, and a full 9.8% fewer than the national institutional average, and a substantial decline from 2012 participation.

PROGRESS:



In an effort correct these troubling statistics, Wofford College created a Voter Education & Engagement Steering Committee and joined with the other member institutions of the Southern Conference to take part in the “SoCon Votes Challenge.” In 2017, Wofford was one of 83 institutions designated as a “Voter-Friendly Campus” by NASPA. Through these efforts, the College was able to improve voter registration rates, and voter participation rates in 2016 from their 2012 and 2104 levels (see **Figure 1**). Voting improved among every

academic classification of students, most notably among first-year students with an 8.9% increase in voter participation.

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

CAMPUS PARTNERSHIPS:

With almost 1800 undergraduates from over 25 states Wofford achieves the best results through the coordination, collaboration, and cooperation of many different entities. Campus partnerships were key to the success of Wofford's efforts in 2016. The steering committee aims to continue cultivating on-campus collaboration and seeks to focus efforts on creating new partnerships within the broader Spartanburg community.

The partnerships listed below will continue to provide important aid in our effort to increase voter engagement.

The Athletic Department (Athletic Marketing & Promotions)

Through a partnership with the Wofford Athletics Department we gain a valuable teammate, especially for the "SoCon Votes" Initiative. Through this partnership, we have been able to:

- host voter education and registration events at home athletic contests, registering dozens of students and community members at football games, volleyball matches, and soccer matches.
- Broadcast voter education and engagement initiatives to the student body and the general public in a collected setting through the use of the stadium TV and in-game PA system.

The Office of Residence Life

Through a unique partnership with the Office of Residence Life we were able to reach students where they are and where they live. Through this relationship we were able to:

- create and host educational opportunities within the residence halls regarding voter education and registration.
- use Resident Assistants as an additional point of contact with students to educate them about our efforts.

The Office of Student Activities

Through a partnership with the Office of Student Activities we were able to access resources to improve our reach and bring more students to the table in organizing events. Through this partnership we were able to:

- host campus-wide activities related to our efforts.
- take part in the student organizations fair held at the beginning of the semester.

The Office of Marketing and Communications

Through a partnership with the OMC we will be able to access additional resources to reach more students. Through this partnership we will be able to:

- send out voter information emails with important dates, deadlines, and community resources.
- create a unified and consistent message for our campus-wide initiative.

The steering committee seeks to expand current partnerships and create new ones with the on-campus parties below.

The Office of Diversity and Inclusion

Turn-out among minority students at Wofford has been exceptionally poor, through a renewed partnership with the Office of Diversity and Inclusion we will be able to partner with each of the clubs and organizations that are advised through this office to specifically target and tailor our message.

FYI (Orientation and First-Year Introductory Courses)

Through a renewed partnership with the FYI office we will be able to reach each of our nearly 500 first-year students individually. Specifically, we will be able to:

- include information about civic engagement, registration deadlines, absentee ballots, and important voting dates in the FYI courses.
- Provide access to voter registration tools as a part of the FYI curriculum.

Wofford Campus Union

Through a partnership with the Wofford student government we will gain a key ally in our efforts. Specifically, we will be able to:

- gain additional funds to host events and market the initiative
- access nearly 50 student leaders at one time to spread information and gain buy-in from the student body

COMMUNITY/BUSINESS PARTNERSHIPS:

Through a partnership with TurboVote, Wofford College has been able to provide voter registration services, the delivery of voter information, and election reminders to our students. The steering committee will continue this partnership through August 2019.

Additional efforts will be made to partner with the community organizations listed on page 1.

TIMELINE & SUMMARY

End of Summer

- Meet with OMC and Athletic Marketing to develop a marketing campaign
- Meet with RA staff to discuss their role in the effort
- Identify student members of the steering committee

Move-in and Opening Week

- Distribute voter registration information via RAs
- Hold a Voter Registration Drive during the Student Involvement Fair

Pre-Election Host voter registration drive at 1 home volleyball match and 1 home soccer match

- Hold Voter Registration Drives in campus “hot spots” on a date determined by steering committee
- Use OMC and RAs to disseminate information to students
- Partner with Residence Life to host informational programs and registration drives with individual residence halls
- Send out absentee voting information
- Hold an absentee voter drive
- Partner with student-run media sources (OG&B, WoCoRadio) to publicize efforts and feature voter information
- Provide Voter Registration/Information Tables at home athletic events

GOTV

- Send out reminders about Election Day
- Partner with community organizations to provide local students with transportation to polling places
- Host an Election Night Party with College Republicans, College Democrats, and the Office of Student Activities

Post-Election

- Review NSLVE data as soon as it becomes available
- Evaluate engagement and education strategies
- Update the master plan to take the college through the 2020 Presidential Election
- Meet with steering committee to evaluate efforts and determine new members