

Use Your Vote!
Voter Engagement Campaign 2018
Chatham University

Context

Chatham University, a dynamic, evolving institution located in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, continues traditions of community engagement beginning with the 1869 inception of the Pennsylvania Female College. Today, the University maintains a historical commitment to women's education even as we have transitioned into a co-educational institution. At the core of our mission is serving our communities and graduating engaged citizens.

Chatham University "prepares women and men to be world ready," defining world readiness as "being an informed and engaged citizen in one's communities; recognizing and respecting diversity of culture, identity and opinion; and living sustainably on the planet." Chatham's mission creates an expectation for all students, and the university community, to collaboratively address issues of public concern on local and global levels.

University Mission Statement

Chatham University prepares women and men to be world ready: to build lives of purpose and value and fulfilling work.

In addition to appropriate professional skills and liberal arts learning, Chatham believes that world readiness means being an informed and engaged citizen in one's communities; recognizing and respecting diversity of culture, identity and opinion; and living sustainably on the planet.

Overview of Voter Engagement Campaign

In the months leading up to the 2016 presidential election, the Office of Student Affairs and the Pennsylvania Center for Women and Politics partnered to implement a formalized campaign to increase voter engagement. Efforts to engage voters continued after the presidential election through the implementation of a biweekly politics and current events discussion series called Newsday Tuesday and regular programming offered by the Pennsylvania Center for Women & Politics. This ongoing voter engagement campaign will be further utilized in the fall semester leading up to the midterm elections.

Through this campaign, we plan to foster greater awareness of the importance of engaging in our country's democratic processes. Widespread engagement by students, faculty, and staff will generate an increase in awareness, dialogue, and action. In order to achieve this goal, we will implement a series of programs and events designed to provide voter education, voter registration, and ballot access.

Coalition

The coalition for our campaign primarily consists of professional staff, faculty, and students who work with and for the Office of Student Affairs and the Pennsylvania Center for Women and Politics. We also plan to utilize the Chatham Student Government in the promotion and implementation of the campaign.

- *Office of Student Affairs*

The area of civic learning and democratic engagement is housed under the Office of Student Affairs at Chatham. As such, the Office of Student Affairs provides the campus with a variety of programs and initiatives to engage students in our local community and beyond. Such opportunities include but are not limited to the Emerging Leaders Institute, Alternative Spring Break, Chatham Student Government, monthly service opportunities, and the Bonner Leaders Program. Subsequently, all efforts related to our participation in the NASPA Lead initiative are also housed in the Office of Student Affairs.

- *Pennsylvania Center for Women and Politics*

The Pennsylvania Center for Women and Politics (PCWP) at Chatham University is a non-partisan center devoted to fostering women's public leadership through education, empowerment, and action. The first to focus on women's political involvement in Pennsylvania, the Center integrates disciplinary knowledge, civic education, and coalition building while examining the intersection of women and public policy. The Center conducts candidate and advocacy trainings, offers educational programs in applied politics, and provides timely analysis on women's issues. The Center is also home to the University's membership in Project Pericles – a select group of liberal arts colleges and universities that have made institutional commitments to promoting participatory citizenship and social responsibility.

Action Plan

Pre-Election Day Events

- **Tuesday, August 28th, Student Involvement & Employment Fair:** We will set up a voter registration table at our annual Student Involvement Fair. We will attract students to the tables with campaign giveaways and frozen treats. Flyers promoting upcoming events will be posted at the table.
- **TBD, Absentee Ballots Info Session:** An informational session will be held to provide all students from outside of the local area with the process of receiving an absentee ballot.
- **September 11th, Newsday Tuesday Kick-Off Event:** Newsday Tuesday is a biweekly current events and politics-themed discussion series created PCWP and the Office of Student Affairs. This event will kick-off the fall series and will feature coffee and snacks.

- **Monday, September 17th, Constitution Day:** Voter Registration will be available all day as we celebrate Constitution Day in the dining hall and other areas around campus.
- **Thursday, September 27th, National Voter Registration Day:** Promotional materials will be posted around campus to advertise registering on this day. We will provide registration tables in high traffic areas on campus.
- **TBD, Gubernatorial Debate Watch Party:** A debate watch party will be held in the student center on campus. This event will feature a thirty-minute faculty-led discussion about the main topic of the debate will be held before the debate begins.
- **Monday, October 1st - Friday, October 5th, Voter Registration Tabling:** We will be utilizing different tabling and promotional materials during this week to remind students that the deadline to be registered to vote for the presidential election is October 11th.

Election Day Events

- **Tuesday, November 6th, Mid-Term Elections Watch Party:** Pizza and snacks will be provided to enjoy while watching the returns come in from around the country. PCWP staff will be on hand to discuss the results with students. Games and prizes will also be offered to attract students to the event.

Post-Election Day Event

- **Thursday, November 8th, Thinking Bigger: PCWP Post-Election Panel:** During this event, panelists will analyze the results of the election and discuss how the results will impact the current administration as well as Congress. The panel will also include information on how attendees can continue to be involved in democratic processes.

Other Campaign Initiatives

- **Social Media Campaign:** A social media campaign will be utilized during the months leading up to the election. Students will be encouraged to post Snapchats, videos, pictures, tweets, and statuses to explain why they plan to vote and/or why others should also vote. These posts will be accompanied by #useyourvote. We will also use our university Instagram account to create “stories” of students explaining why they plan to vote. We’ll use this media to promote events, voter registration opportunities, and important deadlines.
- **Poster Campaign:** A variety of posters will be hung around campus leading up to the election. Topics covered by the posters will include how to register to vote, how to vote, and why you should vote. We also plan to have a series of posters that feature quotes from historical figures about the importance of participating in democratic processes.

Goals

Through our voter engagement campaign, we hope to achieve both measureable and immeasurable goals.

1. Encourage students to be active participants in our democracy by fostering civic learning and knowledge in democratic processes.
2. Encourage more students to be engaged in local and national elections.
3. Demonstrate that the percentage of students at Chatham University who are registered voters and who have voted in local and national elections has increased. Data provided by NSLVE should help us to determine this.