



2018 Voter Friendly Campus Action Plan

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OVERVIEW

The University of the South Office of Civic Engagement's vision statement is "Active global citizens advancing economic, social, and environmental well-being". In accordance with that vision, the OCE seeks to support students on their way to becoming "active global citizens." A crucial part of active citizenship is participation in voting.

According to the NSLVE data, in the 2016 election, Sewanee saw an increase in student registration and voting from the 2012 election. However, the increase in voting was due only to increased enrollment, and the percentage of students that voted actually decreased from 39.1% in 2012 to 37.9% in 2016. NSLVE also found a decrease in the rate of students who voted in person on election day in 2016 and an increase in absentee voting. This information has helped shape the goals for this year's Democratic Engagement Initiative.

GOALS

The aim of the 2018-2019 Democratic Engagement Initiative, *Yea, Sewanee Votes!*, is to increase voter registration, education, and turnout among Sewanee students, faculty, and staff, and to foster a campus culture of civic responsibility that will keep students, faculty, and staff engaged even after the midterm elections.

BEST PRACTICES

Strategic Partnerships

The Office of Civic Engagement has partnered with the following groups and organizations:

- ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge
- Voter Friendly Campus
- CivicTN
- Campus Election Engagement Project (CEEP)
- TurboVote

Campus-wide Election Committee

Yea, Sewanee Votes! will be forming a committee of dedicated students, faculty, and staff that will meet regularly to discuss upcoming events, ideas, and best practices. The two student chairs will be Alexandria Chastenet and Emily Badgett, who are Sewanee's CEEP fellows for the Fall 2018 semester.

The CEEP fellows will be receiving training from CEEP as well as OCE staff. These students will work a minimum of 10 hours per week with *Yea, Sewanee Votes!* to host and plan registration, education, and Get Out the Vote events.

Voter Registration

Voter registration events and general registration assistance, beginning with freshman registration, will happen throughout September and October. The main focus of the registration efforts will be utilizing TurboVote to get as many people registered as possible.

- Orientation
 - During new student orientation, *Yea, Sewanee Votes!* will aim to get them to register to vote by hosting a table at orientation. The table will be manned by the CEEP fellows, OCE staff, and additional volunteers.
- Voter Registration Week
 - During National Voter Registration Week, CEEP fellows and volunteers will host registration tables in the dining hall as well as other strategic locations on campus.
- Registration Assistance
 - CEEP fellows, OCE staff, and volunteers will be trained to walk people through TurboVote registration. Paper registration forms will be available at the OCE main office. CEEP fellows and other student volunteers will attend a training at which they will learn where to find voting information on each state and will become experts on registration and voting laws and requirements for priority states. Priority states will be identified based on the number of enrolled students from each state.

Voter Education

Yea, Sewanee Votes! will work to educate the community on political issues and processes through non-partisan events.

- *One Vote* Screening
 - On October 9th, *Yea, Sewanee Votes!* will host a screening of *One Vote*, a film that follows five diverse voters on election day, at the Sewanee Union Theater. After the film someone connected with the film will be on site to do a Question and Answer session.
- At least one other voter education event
 - As part of their fellowship, the CEEP fellows will be hosting at least one other education event. The nature of this event will be up to them to decide. Possible options include: Congress to Campus, hosting local politicians, or an “issue fair” in which student organizations would host tables to explain different perspectives on and discuss issues important for this election.

Voter Turnout and Campus Culture

Yea, Sewanee Votes! expects to increase voter turnout by reducing barriers that the community faces and by fostering a campus culture of democratic participation.

- *Yea, Sewanee Votes!* Swag
 - In order to create excitement and interest around *Yea, Sewanee Votes!* t-shirts, buttons, stickers, temporary tattoos, and reusable straws will be given out at every opportunity. These items not only appeal to students because they are fun, but also will make *Yea, Sewanee Votes!* more visible and help to create a culture of democratic participation.
- Online presence
 - *Yea, Sewanee Votes!* will be featured frequently across OCE social media platforms. The Sewanee TurboVote link will also be on the campus-wide engagement portal, and all users will be encouraged to sign up with a pop-up invitation the first time they log in.
- Voter Turnout
 - *Yea, Sewanee Votes!* will host a Get Out the Vote event the week of early voting or on Election Day.
 - Students from neighboring communities will be able to sign up for ride sharing to their home polling locations during early voting.
 - People who show up to *Yea, Sewanee Votes!* events will be encouraged and helped to fill out Voting Plans by OCE staff, CEEP fellows, or other trained volunteers.

- While registering with TurboVote, participants will be encouraged to check their eligibility for absentee voting and to sign up for TurboVote's absentee tools that reduce barriers to absentee voting.
- Paper absentee ballot request forms and stamps will be available at the OCE main office.
- First time voters in Tennessee must either register or vote in person. Students who would otherwise be eligible for absentee voting face additional barriers if they are unable to go home to vote. *Yea, Sewanee Votes!* will work with the local election commission to ensure first-time Tennessee voters are able to absentee vote by verifying their identity.

Post Election

- The Election Committee will discuss the possibility of hosting a post-election event, and how to continue the efforts into the spring semester.

EVALUATION

The Committee will meet in the spring to discuss how the efforts went and how to improve in the future. Our TurboVote administrator will look at TurboVote data to see which our campaign were most and least successful. We will distribute a survey after the election to discern how impactful our efforts were at students' decision to vote. Finally, when we receive our 2018 NSLVE data we will review and compare it to the 2016 and 2012 data and use it to create future plans.

During the Fall semester, the committee will collect data to determine the following:

Number of

1. student encounters at registration events
2. voters registered through Turbovote
3. voters registered by paper
4. registered voters who voted
5. attendees at educational events
6. qualitative responses to surveys given out at each educational event
7. results from the survey after the election to discern how impactful our efforts were at students' decision to vote.