

Knox College Campus Election Engagement Project

Knox College has a long and esteemed history of political involvement, dating back to the mid 19th Century, when Abraham Lincoln and Stephen Douglas debated on the steps of Old Main. The Knox Election Engagement Initiative 2016 aims to add energy to the election cycle and help new voters understand the issues affected by the elections and their roles in the election process.

Already, student interest in national elections has increased courtesy of the non-stop news cycle. The competitive primaries have spurred increased political involvement, and we hope to harness this energy in the time leading up to the general election. But voting affects more than one or two offices at the national level. Voters are also asked to select candidates for local and state offices. This coming year, we anticipate voters will turn out for the national election. But what do they know about the state and local races? Do they understand their role in the local process? Do they know the candidates and what they do? How do they decide whether to vote in their hometown or here at the College?

This Initiative has three overarching goals:

1. To educate students (and the larger campus) about the importance of making their voice heard in the election process;
2. To educate students about the candidates under consideration and where those candidates stand on issues important to the voter;
3. To increase student voter registration rates and election participation.

We will achieve these goals through a series of events designed to engage students in learning more about the candidates, the issues, and their role as voters, beginning this spring and continuing through November.

Calendar:

- **April**
 - Finalize roster of student leadership team to begin project planning for Fall 2016.
 - Establish social media presence for Initiative on Facebook and Instagram. This is a great way to reach many students, across media platforms, absolutely free.
- **May**
 - *VoterPalooza* - May 7, 2016
 - This event, in conjunction with the campus-wide LincolnFest (a day-long live music event), will be geared towards all students. This event is held at a central location on campus, inside and outside, all day long. The student leadership team will encourage voter registration and offer a “Rock the Vote Station” set up nearby for online registrations.
 - Reminder cards will be offered to seniors reminding them to register when they arrive at their new homes for graduate school or employment.

- **June**
 - *Farewell to Grads and Voter Reminders* - June 3, 2016
 - As Knox graduates prepare to depart Knox, they are asked to complete the First Destination Survey, which will include questions about registration and voting activity during their time in college. Most will be old enough to have registered and voted in the 2012 presidential election. This information serves as a baseline for evaluating the effectiveness of the Initiative.
- **July**
 - Convention streaming available for students on campus. Preparation for September arrival of students.
- **August**
 - Preparation for September arrival of students.
- **September**
 - **GOALS: 1. Help students decide where to register (at home or at school). 2. Get students registered. 3. Begin discussion on what matters to them in a candidate.**
 - **ACTIVITIES:**
 - *New Student Orientation* - September 7, 2016
 - Student voter registration drive as part of New Student Arrival Day. The “Rock the Vote Station” will be set-up as another arrival checkpoint for new students. New students will be given an opportunity to register as they arrive on campus. Students not registering upon arrival will be given informational flyer for online registration.
 - *Back-to-school Voter Registration Drive* - September 11-16, 2016
 - When returning students arrive (Sept. 11), members of the project team will offer registration opportunities in a high-traffic area near the dining hall. Registration materials and marketing materials for upcoming voter education events will be available during lunch and dinner hours that first week.
 - *Constitution Day* - September 17, 2016
 - Constitution Day Keynote lecture by a professor of political science to discuss the history of elections in America and the value of voting.
 - Students, faculty and staff will be invited to participate in an online quiz about the Constitution. Correct quizzes will be entered into a drawing for door prizes (one for students, one for faculty/staff).
 - *Debate Watch Party* - September 26, 2016
 - The recreational lounge on campus will project the debate on the large screen. Leadership team will provide refreshments and voter education guides and an opportunity for voter registration. Door prizes and “commercial break quizzes” will keep watchers engaged.
- **October**

- **GOALS: 1. Get students registered. 2. Help students understand more about state and local races. 3. Help students understand how voting works.**
- **ACTIVITIES:**
- *Debate Watch Party* - October 9, 2016
 - During the presidential debate, a large residence hall lounge on campus will show the debate on the large screen TV. Leadership team will provide refreshments and voter education guides and an opportunity for voter registration (or requesting absentee ballots). Door prizes and “commercial break quizzes” will keep watchers engaged.
- *Election Engagement Day* - October 19, 2016
 - Each fall, Knox holds an Institute Day for students to catch up on reading and explore off-campus study, community service, or experiential learning opportunities.
 - In conjunction with Knox’s Fall Institute Day, we will host workshops aimed at increasing voter knowledge about the electoral process and where candidates stand on issues. Voters will have an opportunity to view sample ballots and learn more about the state and local offices that are being contested in the election.
 - Because of the full day, there will not be a Debate Watch Party for the debate this night.
- **November**
 - **GOALS: 1. Encourage voting.**
 - **ACTIVITIES:**
 - *Get out the Vote Effort* - November 7, 2016
 - Encourage early voting for those voting in town. We will hold a “March to the Polls” effort the night before the election. It is a shorter distance to the election office than to the college precinct’s poll location. This allows student voters to cast their ballots at the election office, rather than walk the longer distance. Transportation to the polls is not necessary in Galesburg, since the polls are nearly adjacent to campus.
 - *Election Returns Watch Party* - November 8, 2016
 - Similar to the debate watch parties, we will host a showing of the election results in the recreation lounge, open to campus, with refreshments provided. Again, door prizes and “commercial break quizzes” will keep attendees’ interest.