

WINTHROP

DECISION

2016



VOTER FRIENDLY CAMPUS INITIATIVE  
FINAL REPORT

Submitted to the Campus Vote Project  
January 24, 2017

WINTHROP  
UNIVERSITY



SYDNEY SOLDNER, VOTING AMBASSADOR

### DECISION 2016 TEAM LEADERS/ CONTACT PERSONS

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## INTRODUCTION

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Winthrop University is a regional, Master's-level, public institution dedicated to improving to state of South Carolina. Promoting civic engagement is a key institutional value and is infused throughout the academic and co-curricular experiences. This emphasis is borne out by the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) results. In 2016, Winthrop seniors were more likely than their peers to report that their Winthrop experience has helped them to be “an informed and active citizen” (69% of Winthrop seniors, compared to 57% nationally). Similarly, 69 percent of Winthrop seniors reported that Winthrop emphasizes “attending events that address “important social, economic, and political issues” (compared to 45% nationally).<sup>1</sup> Similarly, Winthrop University students voted at higher rates in 2012 and 2014 than students nationally.<sup>2</sup>

Consistent with these institutional values, Winthrop University embarked on an ambitious action plan to earn Voter Friendly Campus Designation in the Fall 2016 general election season. Branded as “Decision 2016,” this report summarizes and analyzes the impact of Winthrop University’s Voter Friendly Campus Initiative participation. Stories and photographs are interspersed throughout the report.

## OVERVIEW

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In the 2015-16 academic year, Winthrop University took advantage of South Carolina’s early presidential primary to bring US presidential candidates to campus. Between August 2015 and February 2016, ten (10) US presidential candidates made a total of 13 visits to the Winthrop campus. Winthrop’s Decision 2016 team sought to carry this excitement and momentum into the 2016 general election. The Decision 2016 initiative, sought to: 1) encourage student voter turnout, especially through emphasizing absentee voting; 2) educate Winthrop students and the community on issues related to the election; and 3) enhance the University’s reputation with local leaders and the community. The Decision 2016 team worked primarily from August through November to achieve these goals; however, Decision 2016 events and activities continued through the presidential inauguration.

## COALITION (TEAM)

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The Decision 2016 team was led by Dr. Frank Ardaiole, Vice President for Student Life; and Dr. Karen Kedrowski, Dean of the College of Arts & Sciences. The final team was quite similar to the one included in the Action Plan. The final group’s membership is listed in Table 1. Those who were added after the Action Plan was submitted are listed in red. Those whose schedules precluded attending team meetings but participated in other ways are listed in italics.

The team met initially on July 11, 2016 to discuss plans and to weekly from August 17 through October 7, 2016 (the day before the South Carolina Voter Registration deadline) and biweekly from October 21 through November 4. In addition, the group communicated through email, maintained a Dropbox for documents and materials, and populated a web page with a running list of Decision 2016 events and activities. The team meetings were informal, with attendees providing updates from the groups, departments, or programs they represented. Often team members would report on behalf of individuals or programs who could not attend. The group expanded to include additional student groups and representatives of the Office of University Communications and Marketing.



DR. KAREN KEDROWSKI & DR. FRANK ARDAIOLO

Not only was the team’s membership fluid, the group took a very expansive approach to election-related programming. Several events and activities were organized independently of the Decision 2016 team and were included in the initiative’s events and publicity with the organizers’ permission.

**Table 1: Decision 2016 Team and Partners**

Decision 2016 Team Leaders	
Frank Ardaiole Vice President for Student Life	Karen M. Kedrowski Dean, College of Arts & Sciences
Decision 2016 Team Members	
Ellin McDonough, Career Services and Civic Engagement Patricia Riley, Student Activities Anthony Davis, Advisor to Council of Student Leaders Beth West, Chair, Council of Student Leaders Steve Schuh, Residential Learning Coordinator Judy Longshaw, News and Media Services Manager	Roman Vitanza, President, College Democrats Katarina Moyon, West Forum Summersby Okey-Hamrick, West Forum Jennifer Disney, Political Science and Women's and Gender Studies Tyra Holcombe, Student Shawn Cetrone, Videographer
Other Campus Partners	
Winthrop NAACP College Republicans Socialist Student Union Gloria Jones, Dean of University College	Angelo Geter, Campus Programming <u>The Johnsonian</u> (Campus newspaper) Department of Mass Communication Department of Interdisciplinary Studies
Community Partners	
South Carolina Campus Compact South Carolina Liberty Fellows York County Election Commission	York County Democratic Party York County Republican Party York County NAACP



DR. JENNIFER DISNEY  
ELLIN MCDONOUGH  
PATRICIA RILEY

The Decision 2016 team made a conscious effort to “work smarter, not harder.” One way this mantra was manifest was by using the cultural event requirement to generate student audiences.<sup>3</sup> Similarly, the Voting Ambassadors piggy-backed on these events to provide voter registration and absentee voting information.

The Decision 2016 team also coordinated with several community partners. These efforts greatly enhanced the quality and quantity of election-related events. Table 2 lists the community partners and the contributes they made. This model was very effective and provides a solid basis for 2018 election activities.

## ANALYSIS OF DECISION 2016 (THE FOUR “BUCKETS”)

The Decision 2016 team identified a number of activities to promote voter registration, education, and turnout that mapped well onto existing areas of responsibility for offices and programs in the division of academic and student affairs. These correspond to the four “buckets” as defined by the Voter Friendly Campus Initiative:



**Bucket #1, Voter Registration:** The Decision 2016 team knew from the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) that between 70 and 80 percent of Winthrop students were registered to vote. Therefore, while the Decision 2016 team encouraged voter registration, most of its efforts were focused on promoting absentee voting. Of the possible activities listed in the Action Plan, the Decision 2016 team implemented all but one.<sup>4</sup>

**Table 2: Campus and Community Partnerships**

Campus Partner	Contribution
Winthrop NAACP, College Republicans, College Democrats	See below
Socialist Student Union	Organized candlelight vigil, campus event, and protest in Tillman Hall
Gloria Jones	Wrote an op-ed on campus civic engagement initiatives that appeared in two South Carolina newspapers
Angelo Geter	Organized and cosponsored debate and election night watch parties
<i>The Johnsonian</i>	Covered Decision 2016 activities and events
Departments of Political Science, Mass Communication, and Interdisciplinary Studies	Organized and sponsored election related events.
Community Partner	Contribution
South Carolina Campus Compact	Designed and printed posters for campus. Co-sponsored the "Bring It to the Table" cultural event.
South Carolina Liberty Fellows	Co-sponsored the Act 388 cultural event; initiated an ongoing series of events with the West Forum on issues of importance to South Carolina.
York County Election Commission	Trained Winthrop Voting Ambassadors and conducted a professional development session on South Carolina voting laws for faculty and staff.
York County NAACP	Worked with the Winthrop NAACP to sponsor a candidate forum featuring candidates for state and local races.
York County Democratic Party	Worked with the Winthrop College Democrats to bring Dr. Jill Biden, spouse of Vice President Joe Biden, to campus for a campaign event and engaged Winthrop students in campaign rallies off campus.
York County Republican Party	Worked with Winthrop College Republicans to host a Get Out the Vote Rally with local GOP office holders and candidates.

Team Member Patricia Riley spearheaded the voter registration and absentee voting efforts. She recruited student Voting Ambassadors, who were trained by Beth Covington, a Winthrop alumna who works for the York County Election Commission. The Voting Ambassadors attended Decision 2016 events and made classroom visits to hand out voter registration forms and information about absentee voting. The Decision 2016 team secured handouts from the Election Commission.

In addition, Ms. Riley worked with Aramark to mark National Voter Registration Day. Aramark had a hosted a special dinner in Thomson Cafeteria (the main cafeteria on campus) that featured the presidential nominees' favorite desserts. Voting Ambassadors were on hand to register students to vote. Team Member Jessica Lynn, Executive Director of South Carolina Campus Compact, designed and printed posters for National Voter Registration Day. In addition, reminders appeared on monitors in the DiGiorgio campus center in advance of the deadline and the student newspaper, *The Johnsonian*, also printed information.

The Decision 2016 team worked with directors of the General Education core courses to reach as many students as possible with voter registration information. Team member Katarina Moyon reached out to Leah Kendall, Director of the First Year Experience, to ask instructors of ACAD 101 (Introduction to the Academy) Winthrop's freshmen seminar course) to schedule Voting Ambassador visits. Team leader Karen Kedrowski contacted Dr. Amanda Hiner, Director of CRTW 201 (Critical Thinking, Reading, and Writing, a required Sophomore/Junior level course), to do the same.



Team member Katarina Moyon sent several emails to all students in advance of the October 8 voter registration deadline and prior to the November 8 election to remind students of the registration and absentee voter deadlines. At least one of these messages was also sent to Faculty/Staff who might be asked questions by students. In addition, the West Forum updated its Voting FAQs page to include the most up-to-date information.<sup>5</sup> Finally, the Division of Student Life volunteered to pay postage for any voter registration forms and absentee ballots returned to the Office of Student Life. Table 3 provides the results of Winthrop's Voter Registration and Absentee Ballot efforts.

**Table 3: Voter Registration Efforts by the Numbers**

Item	N
Voting Ambassadors	25
Events Attended	19
Class Presentations Made	18
Student Organization Meetings	6
Paper voter registration forms distributed	492
Forms returned by the Division of Student Life	326
"Check Your South Carolina Voter Registration" business cards distributed	482
Students registered on National Voter Registration Day	76
South Carolina Absentee Voter flyers distributed	250



DR. DAN MAHONY  
WINTHROP PRESIDENT



DR. JEANNIE HAUBERT

**Bucket #2, Voter Education:** The Decision 2016 team hosted a series of voter education events that began with Constitution Day and continued through the Inauguration. All events were free and open to the public and eligible events were designated as cultural events. Gratifyingly, several departments and programs were interested in hosting election related events and welcomed affiliation with Decision 2016. Over 30 election-related events were held on campus from August 2016 through January 2017. The Decision 2016 team believes passionately that voter education does not end with election day. Rather, it's an ongoing process and continuing responsibility of adulthood. Thus the Team intentionally includes activities and events that occur after the November 8 election since they set the stage for a 2018 and a lifetime of engaged citizenship.

Table 4 lists the election-related events and their estimated attendance. The Records and Registration Office provided precise numbers of students who attended Cultural Events during this period. (Student attendance is recorded by ID swipes.) While some of these events drew a number of members from the community at large, only student attendance is reported in this table. In a few cases, total attendance was significantly higher than the recorded student attendance. These instances are noted in the endnotes.



DR. MARTHA KROPF



DR. KAREN KEDROWSKI

The Decision 2016 team sought to include a variety of ideological and partisan perspectives in its programming and to draw upon the scholarly expertise of the faculty. The team is especially gratified that the NAACP and College Republicans both sponsored candidate forums; the former included Democratic, Republican and nonpartisan candidates. The College Democrats and College Republicans also sponsored rallies.

As you can see, total attendance at Election related events and activities is the equivalent of approximately half of the Winthrop student body.

In addition, two Winthrop students were selected as South Carolina delegates to the #CollegeDebate workshop held at Dominican University in California. #CollegeDebate submitted questions to the Commission on Presidential Debate. As Team Member and #CollegeDebate participant reflected:

College Debate 16 was an unforgettable experience that allowed me to explore this political season in depth and taught me ways to inform my peers about the election and the entire voting process. In addition, it gave me an opportunity to hear from students across the nation and discover what issues matter most to the current college student – which has helped this team hone in on what areas to focus when planning events and discussions. This conference provided an opportunity for student to be ambassadors of their own for the universities in regards to the election to help increase the voter turnout and participation among college aged students.



**Bucket #3, Ballot Access:** In this context, “ballot access” refers to reducing barriers to student voter participation. As noted in the Action Plan, South Carolina election law poses some serious barriers to student voting: an early voter registration deadline, no early voting other than voting absentee in person, and a voter ID requirement. In addition, Winthrop University learned in early September that the polling place for the precinct in which Winthrop University is located was moved from its historical location one block away from campus to a church about a mile away located on a remote side street.

Student team members worked with the Office of University Communications and Marketing to develop a coordinated social media campaign to publicize Decision 2016 activities.

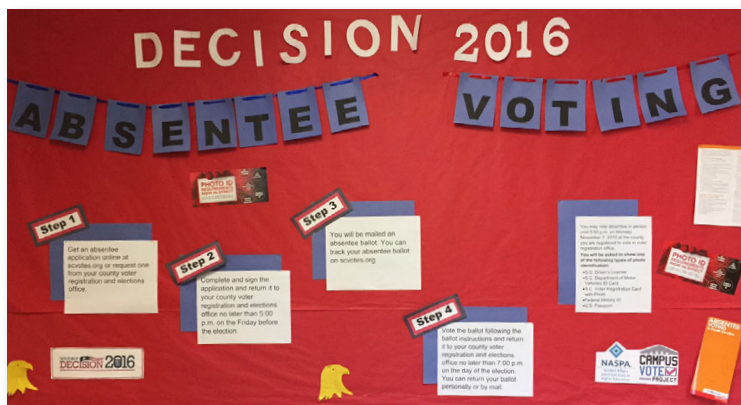
On the other hand, the York County Election Commission expanded opportunities to vote absentee in person by adding a second voting location. This new location was in the Rock Hill City Hall in downtown Rock Hill, just a mile away from campus. In addition, as a result of Hurricane Matthew, the state Election Commission extended voter registration deadline by several days.

The Decision 2016 team sent several all student emails to educate about the voter registration and absentee voting deadlines, with links to relevant web sites. These emails included:

- Two reminders of the initial October 8 registration deadline.
- One notification of the registration deadline extension.
- Information on how to vote absentee in person.

In addition, the West Forum updated its Voting FAQs web site and student leaders worked with the University Communication and Marketing staff to reach students through social media.

Winthrop alumni learned about the Decision 2016 initiative in an article in *The Blue Line*. [CLICK HERE](#)



**Table 4: Election Events and Activities By the Numbers**

Date	Event Title	Student Attendance	Cultural Event?
8/30-9/1/2016	Voting Ambassador Training	25	N
9/1/2016	Voter Training for Faculty/Staff		N
9/12/2016	Civic Discourse at Winthrop University	127	Y
9/12/2016	York County Democratic Party fundraiser with Vice President Joe Biden	10	N
9/15/2016	Constitution Day	32	Y
9/15/2016	Syria Series: New York Times Talk	95	Y
9/15/2016	NAACP Candidate Forum	50	N
9/20/2016	A Voteless People is a Hopeless People	45	Y
9/20/2016	Women and Presidential Election Politics	94	Y
9/21/2016	Syria Series: Putting a Face on Syria. Lecture by Photographer Tina Manley	118	Y
9/21/2016	Vigil for Keith Lamont Scott		N
9/26/2016	Presidential Debate Watch Party	250	Y
9/26/2016	College Republicans Presidential Debate Watch Party I		N
9/27/2016	8th Annual Banned Book Reading	81	Y
9/27/2016	National Student Voter Registration Day Special Dinner		Y
9/28/2016	Stay Woke and Vote Tour		N
9/28/2016	Student protest of police violence and against Tillman Hall		N
10/4/2016	Brief History of Presidential Debates	53	Y
10/4/2016	Voter Registration Drive in Thomson Lobby <sup>6</sup>		N
10/4/2016	Voter Registration Drive in Courtyard Residence Hall <sup>7</sup>		N
10/4/2016	College Republicans Vice Presidential Debate Watch Party		N
10/5-6/2016	Voter Registration Drive in Richardson Residence Hall <sup>8</sup>		N
10/6/2016	The Peace Process in Colombia	41	Y
10/9/2016	College Republicans Presidential Debate Watch Party II		N
10/9/2016	College Democrats Presidential Watch Party II	37	N

**BRING IT TO THE TABLE**

**WHEN IT COMES TO DEMOCRACY, DISCOURSE IS THE BEST COURSE!**

**BRING IT TO THE TABLE**

**Film Screening + Live Table Talks**  
Kinard Auditorium  
October 10, 2016 at 7:00pm  
An Interactive Cultural Event

**Sponsored by:**  
The Xhilarating Xi Beta Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.  
DELTA SIGMA THETA SORORITY, INC. A PUBLIC SERVICE SORORITY "INTELLIGENCE IS THE TORCH OF WISDOM"

CSL Council of Student Leaders  
Campus Compact South Carolina

**EVERY VOTER FIRST QUALITY EVERY ELECTION**

**A VOTELESS PEOPLE IS A HOPELESS PEOPLE**

**IF YOU DON'T STAND FOR SOMETHING YOU WILL FALL FOR ANYTHING**

**#YOUKNOWBETTER**  
A DEBRIEFING OF: KNOW BETTER, DO BETTER

**INTERACTIVE EVENT!**

- ◆ Dr. Disney (Women & Gender Studies)
- ◆ Dean Marlowe
- ◆ Dr. Frederick (MCOM & AAMS)
- ◆ Kinyata Brown
- ◆ Dr. Fuller (College of Ed.)
- ◆ Larry Stevens (College of Business)
- ◆ Professor Ture (ANTH / CRIM)
- ◆ And many more!

**FOCUSING ON IDENTIFYING AND WELCOMING ALLIES**

- ◆ Expanding sociopolitical movements
- ◆ Identifying & controlling the realities of racially motivated microaggressions
- ◆ A campus conversation on becoming an effective ally for racial justice.

**OCTOBER 24TH IN RICHARDSON BALLROOM 7:30PM**

**GLOBAL LEARNING cultural event**

**Being an Election Monitor in a War-torn Nation: Croatia & Liberia**

Speakers:  
Dr. Frank Ardaiolo and Katarina Moyon

**WHEN: OCTOBER 24TH**  
**LOCATION: DINA'S PLACE**  
**TIME: 3PM**

Winthrop University | Division of Student Life | Department of Residence Life



**Table 4: Election Events and Activities By the Numbers**

Date	Event Title	Student Attendance	Cultural Event?
10/10/2016	Bring it to the Table	56	Y
10/24/2016	#You Know Better	74	Y
10/24/2016	#You Know Better, Part 2	41	Y
10/11/2016	Winthrop Poll Talk	45	Y
10/12/2016	Know Better, Do Better	493	Y
10/18/2016	Speech on Religion and the Presidency	40	Y
10/18/2016	Syria Series: Winter is Coming and the Camp is Not Prepared	200	Y
10/19/2016	Rally for Pastor Thomas Dixon and Debate Watch Party	50	N
10/19/2016	College Republicans Presidential Debate Watch Party III		N
10/19/2016	Rally for Democratic US Senate Candidate Pastor Thomas Dixon and College Democrats Presidential Debate Watch Party III	50	N
10/20/2016	Syria Series: Dr. Mary Mikhael	62	Y
10/24/2016	Being an Election Monitor in a War-Torn Nation: Croatia and Liberia	37	Y
10/26/2016	What is Socialism?	18	Y
10/26/2016	Get Out the Vote Rally hosted by College Republicans	100	N
11/1/2016	Carolina Coverage: Whose Election is This?	56	Y
11/1/2016	York County Democratic Party Get Out the Vote Rally with Vice President Joe Biden (College Democrats participated)	40	N
11/4/2016	Election Rally with Dr. Jill Biden	62	N
11/8/2016	Election Night Watch Party	80	Y
11/15/2016	Palmetto Focus: Act 388 Revisited <sup>9</sup>	15	Y
11/15/2016	Syria Series: Welcoming the Stranger in Our Midst by Bedrija Jasik	41	Y
11/17/2016	Syria Series: Environmental Roots of the Syrian Crisis	53	Y
11/22/2016	Building Trust: A Campus Conversation on Race Relations and Policing	49	Y
11/29/2016	75th Anniversary of Pearl Harbor <sup>10</sup>	123	Y
1/20/2017	Brief History of Presidential Inaugurations		Y
1/21/2017	Presidential Inauguration Watch Party		N
<b>Total Scheduled Events &amp; Activities</b>		<b>51</b>	
<b>Student Attendance</b>		<b>2843</b>	

The Decision 2016 team was worried about the impact South Carolina’s confusing election laws on student turn out. The team learned from the York County Election Commission that a number of Winthrop students who were registered outside of York County believed they could vote absentee in person in York County. They did not realize they were required to travel to the county in which they were registered to vote. Team Leader Frank Ardaiole sent a clarifying email to students. However, this is an indication of how easily individuals can be confused by South Carolina’s complex voting laws.

**Dr. Courtney Guenther, Assistant Professor of Biology, encouraged her Anatomy & Physiology students to vote by discussing cutting-edge research on the neurological differences between the brains of liberals and conservatives.**

**Gender in Presidential Elections. Religion and Presidential Politics. Civility in Public Discourse: Just three topics addressed by Decision 2016 cultural events that were a direct response to events on the national stage.**

**Dr. Ginger Williams, Professor of History and Coordinator of the Peace, Justice and Conflict Resolution Studies minor in the Department of Interdisciplinary Studies, organized a series of events calling attention to the tragic civil war in Syria. Dr. Williams graciously agreed to include the Syria Series in the Decision 2016 events. This series helped Winthrop students better appreciate the fragility of democracy and challenges of sustaining voting rights.**



**Bucket #4, Voter Turnout:** By state law, Winthrop University is closed on Election Day. Since the vast majority of Winthrop students live within driving distance of campus, this closure does enable students with transportation to travel to their home precinct to vote. However, it hinders the University’s own Election Day Get Out the Vote efforts.

In addition to its voter education and registration efforts, the Decision 2016 team undertook the following strategies to encourage voter turnout:

- Focused on providing extensive information about absentee voting to students (as described above).
- “Vote Absentee in Person over Fall Break” email sent immediately before Fall Break.
- Team Leader Karen Kedrowski asked parents to encourage their students to vote over Fall Break during her Family Day address to parents.
- Election Day reminders on monitors in the DiGiorgio Campus Center.
- Social media reminders.
- Day-Before and Day-Of Voting Reminder emails, complete with a “take your ID” reminder.
- Drove Winthrop students to the local polling place on Election Day. Thirteen students used this service.

Shawn Cetrone, University Videographer, described Winthrop’s remarkable year in the political spotlight in a YouTube video released on November 4. [CLICK HERE](#)

Dr. Gloria Jones, Associate Professor of English and Dean of University College, described the Decision 2016 initiative in an op ed that was carried in two major South Carolina newspapers.

Team Leader Frank Ardaio was interviewed on local radio station WHRI about the Decision 2016 initiative.

## SUCSESSES

The Decision 2016 is humbled and gratified by the success of the Decision 2016 initiative. We saw ample evidence that Winthrop students were engaged in the election and in important public debates of the day. While these are the most notable successes, others are highlighted in the text boxes throughout the document.

- **Expansion of Election-Related Events Beyond the Decision 2016 Team:** In addition, the number of election-related events expanded beyond those sponsored by the Decision 2016 team. The Departments of Interdisciplinary Studies, Political Science, and Mass Communication especially made significant contributions. This demonstrates that promoting civic engagement and encouraging an informed citizenry is a value held widely in the University community. The Decision 2016 team initially planned about a dozen planned events and activities. The University ended up with more than four times that many. The team is also gratified by the significant student participation, where total attendance is equivalent nearly half the student body.
- **Effective Community Partnerships:** The Decision 2016 Team effectively capitalized on community partnerships that led to several successful events during and after the election. These fruitful collaborations lay the groundwork for the 2018 election cycle. The College Democrats, College Republicans, and the Winthrop Chapter of the NAACP all sponsored events with their York County counterparts. They brought prominent political leaders to campus, including Dr. Jill Biden, spouse of Vice President Joe Biden. U.S. Representative Mick Mulvaney also joined the College Republicans at their first presidential debate watch party. The relationship with the York County Election Commission greatly enhanced the quality of the University's voter registration and voter turnout efforts and also promises to bear fruit in 2018.
- **Turning Tragedy into Civic Engagement:** On September 20, 2016, Mr. Keith Lamont Scott, an unarmed African American man, was shot and killed by a police officer in Charlotte, North Carolina. Demonstrations in downtown followed over the next several days.

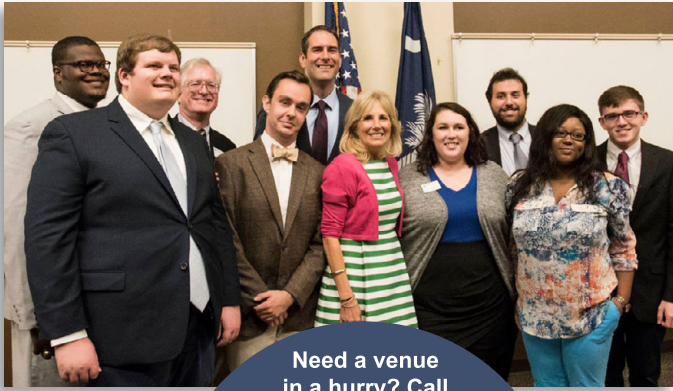
The Johnsonian, Winthrop's award-winning campus newspaper, covered the campus response to Mr. Scott's shooting extensively.

Mr. Scott was the cousin of a current Winthrop student and the uncle of a recent graduate. Several students traveled to downtown Charlotte to participate in the protests there. Locally, Winthrop University students first organized an impromptu candle light vigil on campus on September 21. They followed this by staging a two-part protest on September 28. This first part of the protest was a "die in" in the DiGiorgio Campus Center followed by a demonstration in the main administration building, Tillman Hall, to protest the building's name.<sup>11</sup>

These activities were instigated and organized entirely by students and occurred during the height of the election season.



## RALLY WITH DR. JILL BIDEN AND FRAN PERSON



Need a venue in a hurry? Call Winthrop! The College Democrats worked with the Office of Public Events and the Political Science department to coordinate a rally with Dr. Jill Biden in just 48 hours. Dr. Biden was campaigning on behalf of Fran Person, Democratic Candidate for US House of Representatives.

## RALLY WITH VICE PRESIDENT BIDEN

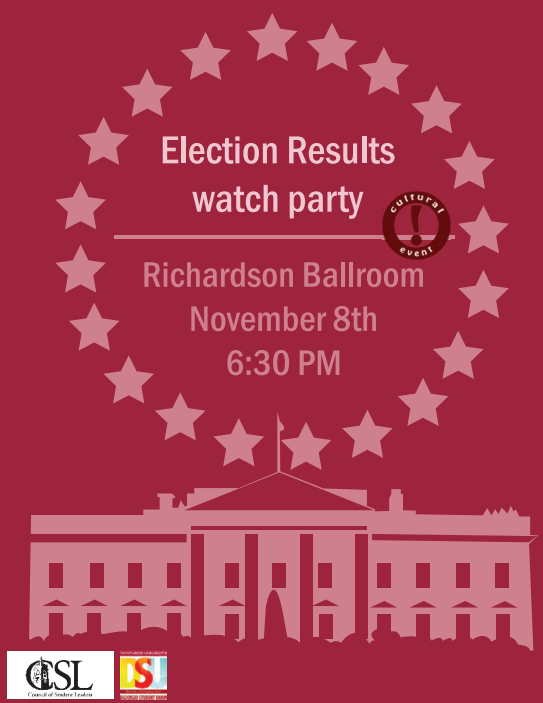


On November 11, 2016, the Winthrop University College Democrats were officially classified as a member of the President's Volunteer Service. The WU College Democrats are only one of two campus organizations so recognized.

## BARRIERS

While the Decision 2016 team's plans came off remarkably well, the team did face a few barriers. Some of these challenges can be remedied by 2018. Others are more intractable. Here are three:

- **Uncontested or Weakly Contested State and Local Races:** While the presidential election was hotly contested and generated a great deal of student interest, the same could not be said for the down ballot races. Most of the state legislative and school district races in York County and the state were uncontested. The students' disappointment when they realized this fact was palpable. While the local race for the US House was contested, the incumbent, Representative Mick Mulvaney, turned down the University's invitations to debate his opponent, Fran Person. Representative Mulvaney occupies a safe Republican seat and consequently, he had little motivation to debate his opponent.
- **Polling Place Relocation:** The University learned in early September that the polling place for the Winthrop precinct had been moved farther away from campus. As noted above, this complicated the Decision 2016 team's efforts to encourage voter turnout. However, the team also discovered this decision was made on the basis of dated and erroneous information. Apparently, the University informed the York County Election Commission some 30 years ago that it did not wish to have a polling located on campus. The Election Commission moved the polling place because it believed, incorrectly, that the building in which the polling place was historically located had been purchased by the University. Team Leader Frank Ardiolo informed the Election Commission that the University is now interested in hosting a polling place (and that it had not purchased the building in question). The team hopes to arrange an on-campus polling place for the 2018 election.
- **South Carolina Voting Law:** The Byzantine nature of the South Carolina voting laws did confuse students, although not as anticipated. The students ultimately were not confused by the flood of information about early voting in North Carolina, as feared. Instead, students were confused by South Carolina laws that requires voters who vote absentee in person to do so in the county in which they are registered. The Decision 2016 team will strive to make its information as clear as possible in the future.



## BEYOND 2016

How can Winthrop University continue to encourage its students to engage in political and social issues between Presidential election years? In fact, the University already has an infrastructure in place to do exactly this. The Decision 2016 Team will lead Winthrop University’s ongoing efforts by continuing to:

- Sponsor cultural events on political, economic, and social issues through the West Forum, academic departments and programs, and student organizations. The West Forum is engaged in a partnership with the South Carolina Liberty Fellows to sponsor forums and lectures on public issues facing the state. We hope this collaboration will turn into a long-term partnership.
- Invite candidates and elected officials to campus so that students may interact with national, state, and local political leaders. The University’s keen interest and good reputation with state political parties and elected officials will help the University achieve this goal.
- Provide information about upcoming special elections and distribute voter registration information in advance of these elections to encourage student participation.
- Encourage students to initiate opportunities for engaged political participation as they did in planning the Scott shooting/Tillman Hall protests.
- Emphasize the importance of informed citizenship through academic programs and co-curricular activities.

The University will have an opportunity to act on these goals before the 2018 midterm elections. U.S. Representative Mick Mulvaney is President-Elect Trump’s choice to become Director of the Office of Management and Budget. This appointment will result in a special election in early 2017 to fill Mr. Mulvaney’s seat. The University will invite candidates to campus and provide information to students to encourage them to participate in this important election.

As the University moves into the 2018 election cycle, the University’s approach will change little. However, based upon lessons learned in 2016, the Decision 2018 team will:

- Include representatives from the Office of University Communications and Marketing from the outset;
- Continue efforts to secure candidate debates for contested state-wide and federal races;
- Initiate negotiations in summer 2018 with the York County Election Commission to secure a polling place on campus;
- Expand efforts to encourage absentee voting; and
- If awarded, extensively publicize the University designation as a “Voter Friendly Campus.”

## NSLVE DATA

The Decision 2016 team leaders will share the 2016 NSLVE data with the team members; members of the Task Force on Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement, from which the Decision 2016 Team members were drawn; student media; and academic deans and department chairs. These data will be used to determine the most effective strategies for voter registration and turnout, just as they were used to focus the Voting Ambassadors' efforts on absentee voting in this cycle. If possible, we will also post these data on the University's web site so they can easily be accessed by all interested constituencies on campus.



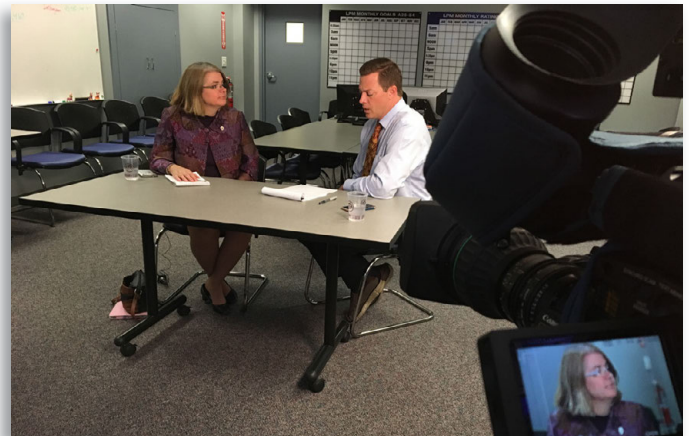
GOP RALLY



LAWRENCE ROSS: KNOW BETTER, DO BETTER



CAROLINA COVERAGE PANEL



DR. KEDROWSKI: DEBATE 2016 INTERVIEW WITH WSOC 9

## CONCLUSION

Participating in the Voter Friendly Campus initiative provided the Winthrop University community an opportunity to build upon its intentional commitment to civic engagement and the excitement of the 2015-16 election year. The Decision 2016 team looks forward to moving forward to the 2018 midterm elections and beyond.

<sup>1</sup>Winthrop University. “National Survey of Student Engagement: ULC 2, Personal and Social Responsibility.” Available: [http://www2.winthrop.edu/effectiveness/nsse/2016NSSE\\_ULC2.aspx](http://www2.winthrop.edu/effectiveness/nsse/2016NSSE_ULC2.aspx). NSSE results had similar findings for Winthrop freshmen.

<sup>2</sup>National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE).

<sup>3</sup>Winthrop undergraduate students are required to attend a total of 18 cultural events prior to graduation. Cultural events include musical, theatrical, and dance performances; narrated gallery tours; films with guided discussions; and approved public lectures, forums, and panel discussions on issues of political, social or cultural significance. For more information see <https://www.winthrop.edu/culturalevents/default.aspx>.

<sup>4</sup>The one possible activity was hosting a mobile voter registration van. The Voting Ambassadors were utilized instead.

<sup>5</sup>Winthrop University West Forum. “Voting.” <http://www.winthrop.edu/westforum/default.aspx?id=22047>.

<sup>6</sup>Included in Voter Registration data in Table 3.

<sup>7</sup>Included in Voter Registration data in Table 3.

<sup>8</sup>Included in Voter Registration data in Table 3.

<sup>9</sup>A total of 60 individuals, including state legislators and local school board members, attended this event.

<sup>10</sup>A total of 200 individuals attended this event, approximately half from the community.

<sup>11</sup>The administration building was renamed “Tillman Hall” in the 1960s in memory of former Governor “Pitchfork Ben” Tillman. Tillman was an avowed racist and an advocate of lynching. Consequently, the building’s name is the source of considerable controversy on campus. However, as a public institution, the University is subject to the “Heritage Act,” which prohibits renaming the building without a supermajority vote of the state legislature.



FIRST PRESIDENTIAL DEBATE WATCH PARTY



Diversity  
 Quality of life  
 Education achievement gap Economic opportunities  
**Foreign policy** Quality education for all  
 School-to-prison pipeline Politicians  
 K-12 public education system College access **Economy/jobs** Debt  
 Environmental degradation Working poor Resource development Federalism  
**Healthcare** Elections College affordability Privacy  
 Living College readiness  
 Campaign finance reform Wages Drug policy reform  
 Equal pay for equal work Senior citizens Relations with Russia **Social justice**  
**Women's rights** Mass incarceration Monetary policy  
 Opportunity inequality Citizens United Clean energy Militarization of police departments  
 Prescription drug access & costs Free community college Societal issues National security  
 Intolerance Discrimination **Education** Corruption LGBTQ rights **Environment**  
 Institutionalized sexism Deportation of children  
 Poor working conditions Refugees Polarization in politics Federal Reserve system  
 Global military presence Civic engagement **Income inequality**  
**Immigration** Government Access to quality health care  
 Influence of special interest groups  
 Youth voice Sustainable energy **Civil rights**  
 Reproductive freedom  
 Second Amendment  
 Gun safety Drug abuse & addiction Islamophobia  
 Dwindling middle-class Bigotry  
 The Middle East Unity  
 Food insecurity  
 Hate crimes  
 Debt Taxes

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