Jeanna Gover & Morgan Lauten
Birmingham-Southern College – Birmingham, Alabama

Project Topic:
Voting Rights and Accessibility

Project Overview:
We will focus on increasing voter participation for both our campus and the surrounding community by targeting two groups – millennials and minorities – both of which have statistically shown a disenchantment with the entire political process. The student body houses a multitude of unregistered citizens, simply because they are turning 18 as they enter college, and the neighborhood surrounding BSC is majority minority. By raising awareness and promoting participation, we hope to serve as guides through the registration and voting processes for first-time voters and seasoned veterans alike. We plan to emphasize the importance of voting to the democratic process through our advocacy.

Events/Initiatives:

1) National Voter Registration Day: This event will take place on September 23rd, and we are planning a highly visual registration push on campus and in the community. Through blanket media contact with the student body, we plan to generate interest and desire for students to visit our registration booth. We will also be canvassing the neighborhood to seek out unregistered voters. By tracking how many people we register, we will be able to measure our success rate.

2) Monthly seminars: We will conduct monthly seminars to discuss the basics of registration, voting, and the importance of bipartisanship politics. We will measure our success through an attendance goal which will be based on the time of day, location, and overlapping events on campus on a particular day.

3) Build a relationship with Birmingham community organizations: We have already made great connections with a local bipartisan group that canvases neighborhoods across Birmingham seeking to register voters and advocate for political participation. We hope to strengthen those ties by participating in their events regularly and contributing to their research. We will also be able to use their resources to measure our success rate in area surrounding campus.

Measurable Goals:

1) Increase voter registration on campus to 75%: We will begin by identifying the eligible voters on campus through the records office. Then, we will check public records for voting registration. We will follow-up with any non-registered students, faculty, or staff members that are eligible voters and record our success rate.

2) Register at least 100 community members: By partnering with local groups around the city, we will target the neighborhood surrounding the college. Canvassing will provide us an opportunity to register any eligible voters and record our success rate.
3) Bipartisan sympathy in 60% of conversations: Whether we are conversing with students or community members, we want to increase bipartisan attitudes. We will constantly be promoting compromise throughout the year, and we want to hear people say they could see an issue from another point of view, whether they agree or disagree with that point of view. By recording how many people we engage and how many respond openly, we can measure our success rate.

Collaboration with Consortium Schools:

By constantly revising our approach to student engagement based on what works or doesn’t work for campuses similar to our own, we hope to gain knowledge from consortium schools. By the end of the project, we hope to have a finely tuned template to share with other schools, so they may learn from our mistakes and take advantage of our successes.