

JMU'S TRAVELING TOWN HALLS¹

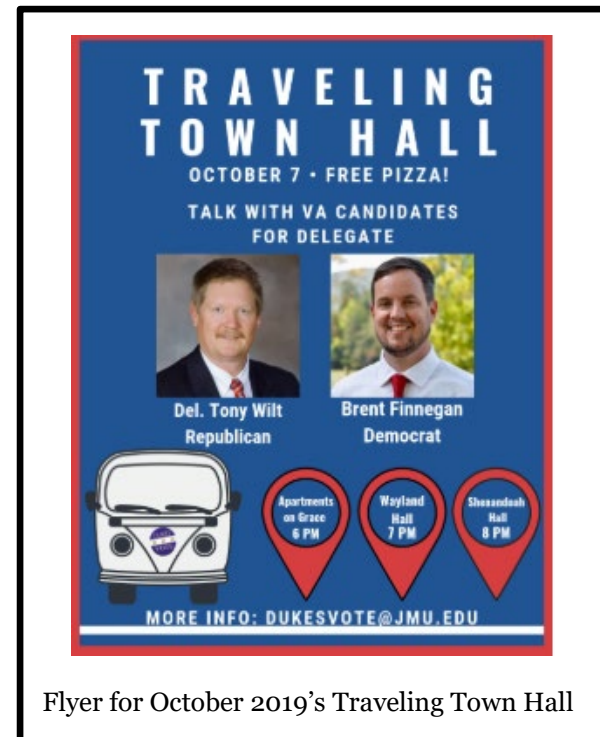
THE PROGRAM

On Monday, October 7, 2019, JMU's Traveling Town Hall featured candidates for Virginia's 25th House of Delegates District **Delegate Tony Wilt** and **Brent Finnegan**. Candidates traveled to three different residence halls at James Madison University to engage directly with students about the issues that matter ahead of the state elections on November 5. The candidates stopped at Apartments on Grace St. at 6 pm, Wayland Hall at 7 pm and Shenandoah Hall at 8 pm.

Student Learning & Developmental Outcomes

As a result of participating in JMU's Traveling Town Hall, **students will be:**

- more knowledgeable about elections, state government/issues in Virginia, political issues in general, and the candidates who participated in the event.
- more interested in political issues, more likely to discuss political issues with others, and more likely to take political action.
- more understanding of people with differing political perspectives.



THE PARTICIPANTS

About 50 students participated in the Traveling Town Hall at each of the three locations.

THE ASSESSMENT

A short 14-item survey was created to obtain students' perceptions of how they were affected by the town hall experience, whether they would recommend it to other students, and what they liked (or did not like) about the experience. A paper copy of the survey was available with a QR code, allowing respondents to complete their survey using the paper copy or online.

The plan was to disseminate the surveys after the candidates were finished answering questions, with an announcement informing the students to complete the survey before they left. Unfortunately, the students left immediately after questions concluded. Surveys were passed out as students were leaving, but not all participants received a survey and no announcements were made encouraging students to complete the survey. This resulted in a very low response rate, with only 6 students completing the survey (3 using the paper copy and 3 using the online form).

The results below should be considered with extreme caution given the incredibly low number of respondents. Suggestions for improving assessment procedures are provided in the **Moving Forward** section of this report.

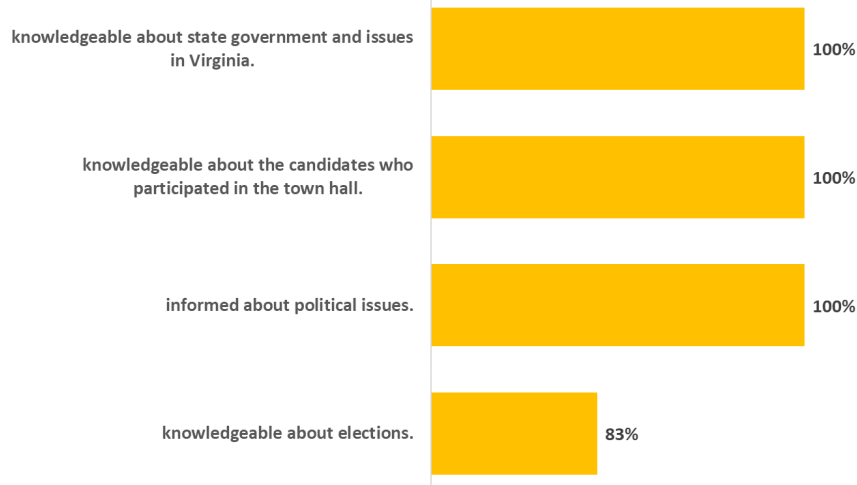
¹ Traveling Town Halls have been offered since Fall 2019; only Fall 2019 is provided here as an example.

THE RESULTS

Overall, the results are very positive. Results for each item set are provided below. The values in each graph represent the percentage of students who agreed or strongly agreed with the item.

Students are more knowledgeable as a result of participating in JMU's Traveling Town Hall.

As a result of participating in this town hall, I am more:

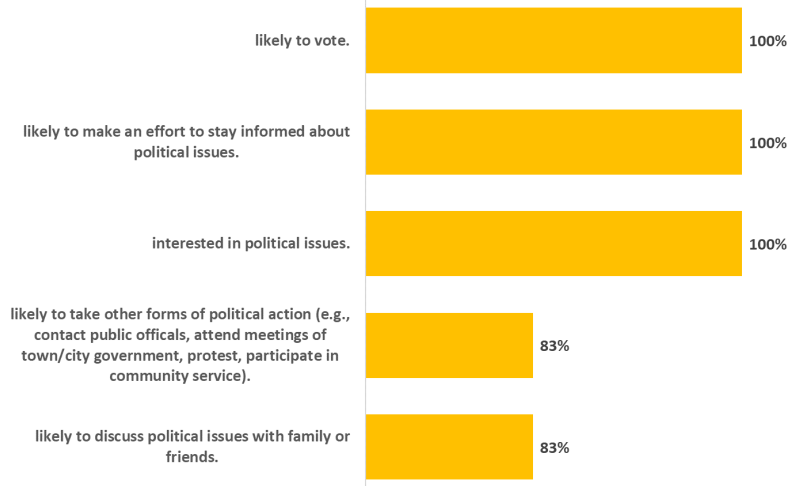


All respondents reported that participation in the event increased in their knowledge about state government/issues in Virginia, political issues in general, and the candidates who participated in the event.

83% reported increased knowledge in elections.

Students are more interested and likely to take political action as a result of participating in JMU's Traveling Town Hall.

As a result of participating in this town hall, I am more:



All respondents reported that the Town Hall experience increased their interest in political issues and increased their likelihood of staying informed and voting.

A slightly smaller percentage (83%) indicated that participation increased their likelihood of discussing issues with others and taking political action (outside of voting).



In addition, **100%** of students report they are more understanding of people with different political perspectives as a result of participating in JMU's Town Hall.

Left: JMU students participating in October 2018's Traveling Town Hall. Photo credit: whsv.com

Other results:

- Students were also asked if participating in the event affected who they planned on voting for. 2/3 of students said participation did affect who they would vote for in November.
- We also asked students whether participating in the Town Hall changed their perceptions of how attentive they believe governmental officials are to the concerns of college students. 1 in 3 students changed in their beliefs as a result of the event, viewing governmental officials as more attentive to the concerns of college students.
- 100% of respondents indicated they would recommend the experience to other students

MOVING FORWARD

An obvious flaw with the FA19 assessment of the traveling town hall is the approach used to disseminate surveys and encourage responses. In future years, the survey should be disseminated *before* the town hall, as students are arriving, with an announcement made at the beginning encouraging students to complete the survey before they leave. Because both paper and pencil and online modes responding were used in FA19, paper copies with the QR code should also be provided in future years.

Traveling Town Hall
Candidates are coming October 10! Join us for FREE PIZZA & make informed Election choices!

Candidate Stops:
6-7 pm Grace Street Apartments (Enter through main entrance in the courtyard, accessible from the front of the building.)
7-8 pm Eagle Hall (Enter through main entrance on construction side of building.)
8-9 pm Shenandoah Hall (Enter on the E-Hall side of the building, walk down through courtyard to the Multipurpose Room.)

Senate Candidates
Tim Kaine Democrat
Corey Stewart Republican
Matt Waters Libertarian

Congressional Candidates
Jennifer Lewis Democrat
Ben Cline Republican

Harrisonburg City Council Candidates
Carolyn Frank Independent
Paloma Saucedo de la Pena Independent
Sal Romero Jr. Democrat
Christopher Jones Democrat
Frank McMillan Independent

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Flyer for October 2018's Traveling Town Hall