



2024 Campus Action Plan to Increase Civic Learning, Political Engagement, and Voter Participation

**Brandeis University
Waltham, Massachusetts**

October 2024

David J. Weinstein djw@brandeis.edu

Executive Summary

The purpose of this plan is to guide the work of the VoteDeis Campus Coalition at Brandeis University and to support the work of students, faculty and staff seeking to support voter registration and voter participation at Brandeis. This plan supports that work by sharing information about

- who at the university is engaged with these efforts,
- what structures and plans are already in place that can be an inspiration or with which people can collaborate,
- strategic recommendations for increasing that participation base don NSLVE data and other Brandeis-specific data.

This plan is for the 2024-25 academic year and summer 2025.

This plan was developed by David Weinstein, Assistant Director of ENACT: The Educational Network for Active Civic Transformation, at Brandeis University. David is the co-founder and the coordinator of the VoteDeis (as in "Vote BranDEIS") Campus Coalition of students, staff and faculty at Brandeis, and is coordinating ENACT's 5-campus ENACT Your Vote initiative (which uses a custom implementation of the Motivote platform.)

He is representing the VoteDeis Campus Coalition and ENACT Your Vote. The VoteDeis Campus Coalition was created in 2020 and is organized by ENACT (Educational Network for Active Civic Transformation) and the Dean of Students Office.

The recently established Vic '63 and Bobbi Samuels '63 Center for Community Partnerships and Civic Transformation (COMPACT) at Brandeis, which ENACT is affiliated with, represents Brandeis University's continued "commitment to justice and deepen its role as a key convener of important national conversations about social issues and public affairs" to quote Brandeis University President Ron Liebowitz's recent "Framework for the Future."

This action plan is focused on the Brandeis University community. We will also collaborate with the four other campuses that are a part of ENACT's ENACT Your Vote initiative: the University of Maine, the University of Hartford in Connecticut, Utah State University and Siena College in New York. (<https://www.brandeis.edu/enact/enact-your-vote.html>)

This plan has been reviewed by members of the VoteDeis Steering Committee, the Brandeis Communications Department leadership, and by other active members of the VoteDeis Campus Coalition, and reflects their input as well.

The VoteDeis Campus Coalition will take the lead coordinating campus efforts at Brandeis University, but is not in charge of all activities; various pieces of the plan will be carried out by individuals, departments, office and student clubs and organizations. VoteDeis will offer support and resources, coordinate efforts and disseminate best practices, and ensure those working on voter engagement or interested in working on it know what is happening at Brandeis and how to get involved.

In 2024-25 VoteDeis has established a calendar of events that are created by, supported by, or relevant to the goals of this plan.

VoteDeis has been a regular participant in the Students Learn, Students Vote coalition, CivXNow, and All In meetings. ENACT Assistant Director David Weinstein participated in the 2024 Campus Compact national conference, representing ENACT and ENACT Your Vote in a poster session.

A member of our team reached out to the local election office to explore opportunities for students to serve as poll workers. Waltham does not use volunteers at their polls, only paid workers who are registered to vote in Massachusetts. The role that eligible Brandeis students (18 years or older, registered in Massachusetts) could apply for is "Inspector." We will be sharing that opportunity with our students, as a first step to building a closer connection with the local election office.

The work of VoteDeis has included students, faculty and staff in lead roles. One of our goals this year is to convene more regularly than we have in the past year, and to seek greater representation of the diversity of each group: faculty, staff, and students.

Leadership

In September 2024 we established the inaugural VoteDeis Campus Coalition Steering Committee. The VoteDeis Campus Coalition Steering Committee includes students, faculty and staff who will

- be lead coordinators of VoteDeis efforts.
- draft the VoteDeis strategy and set the calendar of VoteDeis efforts.
- serve as ambassadors of the VoteDeis voter registration and participation efforts with their respective constituencies/communities.

The Commitment:

- Participate in regular meetings (typically 2 per month during the runup to elections, at other times meet once every one or two months).
- Provide counsel in meetings or via email when questions/opportunities arise.
- Help ensure a process is in place to find a successor if/when they leave the steering committee.

The members will include one or more people in these categories:

- Student union rep
- Other Student reps
- Faculty rep
- Staff rep

The Inaugural VoteDeis Campus Coalition Steering Committee:

- **Rani Balakrishna '25**, Undergraduate Student Union President
- **LeManuel "Lee" Bitsóí**, Vice President of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion -
- **Mandy Feuerman '25**, former VoteDeis student president, former ENACT Your Vote Campus Student Engagement Fellow
- **Ria Escamilla-Gil '27**, Undergraduate Student Union Vice President
- **Professor Jill Greenlee**, Associate Professor, Politics Department and Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Department
- **Noah Hochfelder**, Springboard Fellow (Innovation Track) Brandeis University Hillel / Mitzvot
- **Yoni Kahn '24**, Masters of Public Policy candidate at the Brandeis University Heller School of Social Policy and Management, second year serving as an ENACT Your Vote Campus Student Engagement Fellow, 2024 All IN Student Voting Honor Roll recipient
- **Eileen Kell**, Academic Administrator for Graduate Programs in Education and Womens and Gender Studies
- **Professor Dan Kryder**, Luis Stulberg Chair in Law and Politics, Politics Department
- **Maia Lefferman '25**, VoteDeis student president, ENACT Your Vote Campus Student Engagement Fellow, 2023 All IN Student Voting Honor Roll recipient
- **Madeline Leventhal '26**, Mitzvot
- **Kathleen McMahan**, Executive Administrator and Communications Specialist, Office of the Dean of the School of Arts & Sciences
- **David Weinstein**, VoteDeis Coordinator, Assistant Director of ENACT: The Educational Network for Active Civic Transformation

Each member of the Steering Committee has committed to ensuring a process is in place to find a successor if/when they leave the steering committee.

This year we have expanded the coalition to include active participation from a greater diversity of departments, students from greater range of campus clubs and associations, including the Student Union (student government); the Intercultural Center, and other groups.

There is a core group of students who have been leading the on-the-ground work, several of whom participated in the All-IN 2024 Boston & Massachusetts Campus Voting Summit.

We have substantially expanded our emailing list by reaching out to students at pre-orientation and orientation events and with open meetings and at tabling.

Current VoteDeis Campus Coalition list (in formation): <https://www.brandeis.edu/dean-of-students/programs-and-events/vote-deis/coalition.html>

Commitment

Brandeis University has a longstanding commitment to social justice, and to welcoming a diversity of people and ideas. This extends to encouraging voting. In recent years Brandeis has deepened its commitment to engaging with the legislative process through ENACT: The Educational Network for Active Civic Transformation (<https://www.brandeis.edu/enact/index.html>), a 50-state non-partisan program established at Brandeis, which engaged undergraduates in the state legislative process. ENACT has been active in supporting voter engagement at Brandeis, helping to create and support the VoteDeis Campus Coalition, and has extended that commitment to several of its partner institutions in other states.

[Brandeis University President Ron Liebowitz has signed](#) the Higher Education Presidents' Commitment to Full Student Voter Participation for the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge, committing the campus to increase nonpartisan democratic engagement by working towards full student voter participation.

The “Why I Vote” series of videos created by the VoteDeis Campus Coalition and shared by the University’s social media channels in 2020, (<https://www.brandeis.edu/dean-of-students/programs-and-events/vote-deis/videos.html>) demonstrates the commitment to voting across students, faculty, staff, and administration, featuring President Liebowitz, Professor Anita Hill, and many staff, faculty, students and alumni.

This year we have coordinated with the Communications Office on Instagram posts and takeovers, and website features.

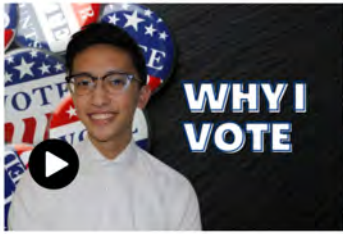
"Why I Vote" Video Gallery



Why I Vote - President Ron Liebowitz



Why I Vote - University Professor Anita Hill



Why I Vote - Anthony Fong '21



Why I Vote - Eliza Welty '22



Why I Vote - Assistant Professor Jill Greenlee



Why I Vote - MJ Ibrahim '23

Voter engagement was incorporated into new student orientation in summer/fall 2023 and in summer/fall 2024, as well as id-year student orientation.

Events include voter registration and participation-focused events (e.g. ENACT Your Vote Day of Action) and events not focused on voting, at which we table with voting support (e.g. tabling at a panel conversation focused on book bans).

More on those and other events here:

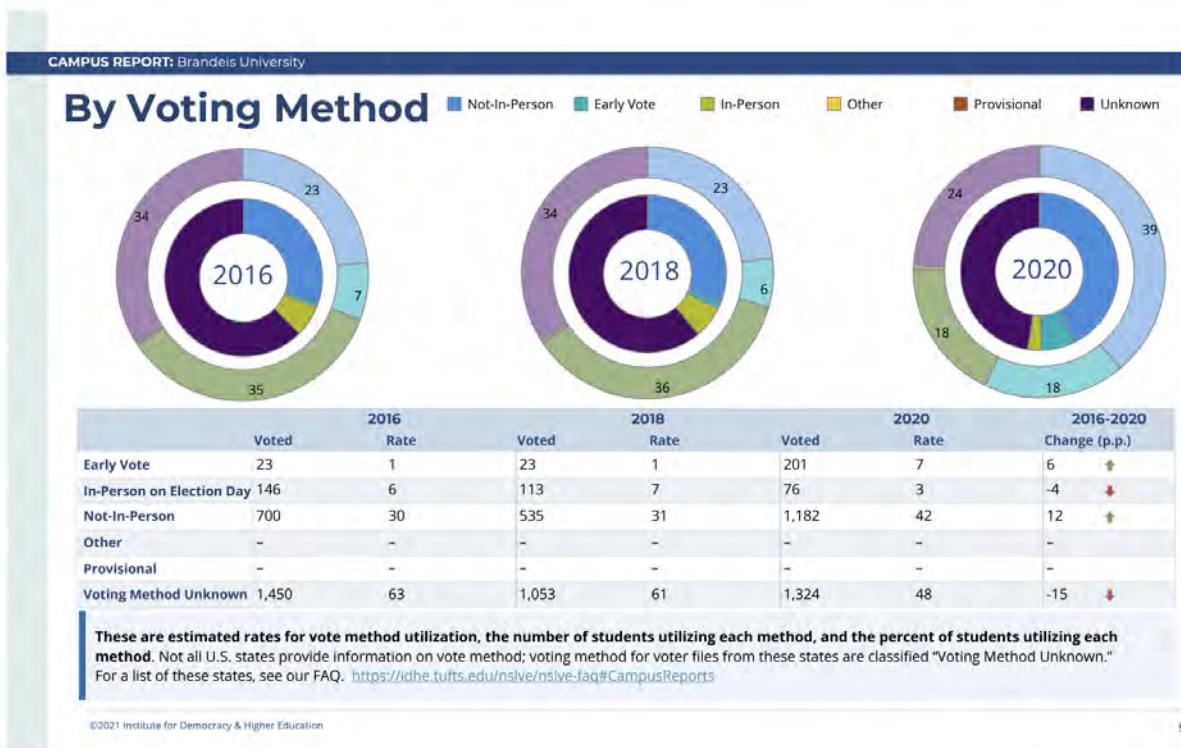
<https://www.brandeis.edu/enact/news-updates/index.html>

Landscape

This plan is focused on the Brandeis University campus in Waltham, Massachusetts, and there will be cross-pollination with the ENACT Your Vote partners University of Maine, the University of Hartford in Connecticut, Utah State University and Siena College in New York.

Brandeis has steadily increased voter participation since the establishment of the VoteDeis Campus Coalition, but as noted in the goals section below, has room to grow.

Goals



Our overall goal is 100% voter registration and voter participation of eligible students.

As shown in the NSLVE chart above, in 2020 most Brandeis people did not vote in person. 1,182 voted not in person, 76 in person on Election Day, and 201 early.

Based on this data, emphasizing support for absentee ballots will be important, including reminders of relevant deadlines, increased communication about access to a notary on campus (VoteDeis Coalition member and librarian Aimee Slater) and envelopes and stamps.

As noted, the library provides voting-related resources, including a website with a vetted guide to state-specific voting information (<https://guides.library.brandeis.edu/VOTE>) which VoteDeis uses at tabling events, and the Library hosts it's own voter registration events.

Voter registration information has been featured in materials sent to incoming first year students in the summer before their first year, has been featured at orientation for new students, and is included in mid-year orientation materials.

The Brandeis Communications Office is exploring ways to feature voter registration information more prominently throughout the university's website, including on the homepage. The university's social media team is collaborating with VoteDeis on social media outreach throughout the fall semester leading up to the November election.

Support for early voting deadlines and logistics will be important as well -- including reminders when relevant of early voting opportunities during school breaks before Election Day, when students might be returning home to where they are registered to vote. (And celebrating Vote Early Day.)

Brandeis will have several long weekends in October for Jewish holidays, and students may be traveling home and able to vote early - even if not on the actual holiday depending on their observance.

CAMPUS REPORT: Brandeis University

By Field of Study

FIELDS	2016			2018			2020			2016-2020 Rate Change (p.p)
	Enrolled	Voted	Rate	Enrolled	Voted	Rate	Enrolled	Voted	Rate	
Area, Ethnic, Cultural, and Gender Studies	162	77	48	143	58	41	100	63	63	↑ 15
Biological and Biomedical Sciences	577	259	45	549	189	34	556	328	59	↑ 14
Business, Management, and Marketing	410	167	41	326	130	40	377	168	45	↑ 4
Computer and Information Sciences	396	196	49	426	144	34	453	248	55	↑ 5
Education	53	25	47	66	33	50	40	28	70	↑ 23
English Language and Literature	86	49	57	88	37	42	77	47	61	↑ 4
Foreign Languages, Literatures, and Linguistics	87	48	55	57	25	44	46	37	80	↑ 25

These are estimated voting rates by field of study, and the numbers we used to calculate the field of study rates. For an explanation of CIP codes, please see our FAQ.* There are roughly 8,000 fields of study among U.S. colleges and universities, so we provide rates for condensed categories.

*<https://tufts.app.box.com/v/idhe-nsive-report-faq>

©2021 Institute for Democracy & Higher Education 14

By Field of Study

FIELDS	2016			2018			2020			2016-2020 Change (p.p)
	Enrolled	Voted	Rate	Enrolled	Voted	Rate	Enrolled	Voted	Rate	
Health Professions	42	29	69	38	20	53	22	15	68	↓ -1
History	72	39	54	60	29	48	81	51	63	↑ 9
Liberal Arts and Sciences, and Humanities	1,367	594	43	1,423	410	29	1,438	807	56	↑ 13
Mathematics and Statistics	91	16	18	296	17	6	261	34	13	↓ -5
Multi/Interdisciplinary Studies	136	56	41	155	43	28	112	51	46	↑ 4
Natural Resources and Conservation	36	28	78	32	15	47	45	34	76	↓ -2
Philosophy and Religious Studies	31	16	52	45	13	29	51	27	53	↑ 1
Physical Sciences	165	53	32	141	49	35	135	44	33	↑ 0
Psychology	209	112	54	189	66	35	176	115	65	↑ 12
Public Administration and Social Service P..	340	177	52	318	143	45	387	240	62	↑ 10
Social Sciences	856	254	30	833	189	23	651	323	50	↑ 20
Visual and Performing Arts	162	76	47	147	69	47	118	75	64	↑ 17
Unknown	128	48	38	95	47	49	118	51	43	↑ 6

As shown in the charts above, the fields of study with the lowest percentage of voting at Brandeis in 2020 include business, management, and marketing; and mathematics and statistics. We will seek to invite faculty, staff, and students from those areas of study into the coalition, and focus outreach to those courses and relevant clubs.

The Brandeis International Business School (a graduate school) is relatively isolated physically on campus, and we will host tabling and outreach at their building.

We seek to increase the overall turnout goal for the campus compared to the 2020 NSLVE presidential data, and as noted to above to close demographic gaps in the NSLVE data. We will also take a closer look at schools we consider peer institutions and will seek to match or exceed their voting participation.

Programmatic goals include:

- Regular annual celebration of civic holidays,
- Voter engagement standard part of new student orientation
- Revival of more regular VoteDeis Campus Coalition meetings (particularly of a steering committee) and listserv updates

Longer term, 2-to-4-year goals include:

- Revival of Boston Votes and/or other collaboration with area schools, possibly including 2-year colleges.
- Establish a transition plan for the steering committee so there are a few regular “slots” we would expect to fill if the person in that slot leaves their role or wishes to cycle off the steering committee.
- Increased focus on and participation in state and local elections

- Incorporate information about international elections.

Strategy

The calendar of VoteDeis activities (continually being updated) [can be found here](#).

(<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1vcZzuUZ6KaaFSGqHf0g7CZ8R7YtBmia9dhCwV5oFSRg/edit?usp=sharing>)

We have created an instruction guide (as a Google Doc) and a Box folder with materials so students can set up and staff voter registration tables. We have also set up a spreadsheet that has facilitated volunteer signups. While these are basic steps they have enabled us to be much more productive this cycle, and have allowed students who may be interested in one or two shifts at a table to drop in and volunteer, while other students make longer or more involved commitments.

Voter registration and participation is become a consistent element of new student orientation in the fall (2024-25 will be the second year it will be included) and we will plan for it to become a consistent element of mid-year orientation in the spring (2024-25 will be the first year it is included).

We are including the Civic Holidays as focus points for class presentations, outreach to clubs, social media and news/website posts, campus events and challenges through our Motivate platform (<https://enactyourvote.motivate.us/>).

We had a successful voter registration drive on National Voter Registration Day. Plans are underway for National Voter Education Week and Vote Early Day.

Will share out deadlines for registration and absentee ballots -- with reminders of on-campus resources, including by sending reminders through our VoteDeis email listerv, our Motivate platform, and through posts on Instagram. (<https://www.instagram.com/votedeis/>)

We will run competitions through our Motivate platform with a charitable donation and/or other of prizes for taking voting and civic engagement actions.

We are reaching out to student athletes through their email channels.

We hosted a Presidential Debate Watch Party and we are hosting a Vice Presidential Debate Watch party. Both were cosponsored by a diverse range of departments and student organizations. The presidential debate watch had a very strong turnout, even with other student organization and department-sponsored watch parties taking place:

<https://www.brandeis.edu/enact/news-events/2024-9-10-presidential-debate-watch-party.html>.

The vice-presidential debate has not yet taken place

Social media outreach: The VoteDeis Instagram account (@votedeis) has been the focus, and posts have been shared by and are planned with the primary Brandeis University account, in collaboration with the Brandeis University social media team.

While most of the above actions have been focused on the runup to the November 2024 election, the establishment of a steering committee, the nurturing of student leaders from every class year, and the much-heightened visibility of VoteDeis as a support for and clearinghouse of voting and civic engagement recourses are all the groundwork for longer-term goals.

Past election events are already on our calendar. We will also hold debrief and planning sessions with the VoteDeis student leaders, and with the VoteDeis Steering Committee. The intention will be to build in the momentum for the fall and establish the calendar of regular events and activities (such as orientation-related activity, Civic Holidays, and election-related activities for midterm and local elections) as well as events and activities that are one-time (such as tie-ins to a guest speaker on campus or an exhibit at the campus museum.) We have both types of events in the works this fall.

NSLVE as a Resource for Colleges & Universities

Brandeis University's 2020 NSLVE report:

<https://allinchallenge.org/wp-content/uploads/Brandeis-University-NSLVE-Report-2020.pdf>

Reporting

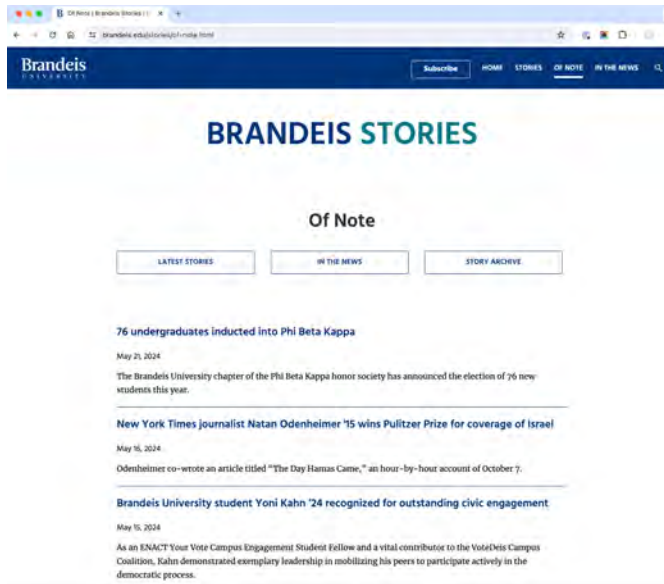
This action plan will be shared by linking to our All In Campus Democracy Challenge page, as we already do. Our NSLVE reports and action plans are linked from the left sidebar of all of our VoteDeis webpages:

<https://www.brandeis.edu/dean-of-students/programs-and-events/vote-deis/index.html>

We will share the plan with our VoteDeis Campus Coalition via our members listserv and will convene a meeting in late August/early September to share the plan.

We will also seek input from key members of the VoteDeis Campus Coalition listed above (faculty, staff and student) and seek recommendations for revisions.

We will also be posting news in e-newsletters. In 2023-24 we included voting-related items in the ENACT e-news, the COMPACT e-news and the Legal Studies Program e-news, and on websites and Brandeis news page (for example a recent feature on a student selected for the All In Student Voting Honor Roll: <https://www.brandeis.edu/enact/news-updates/2024-4-24-all-in-award-yoni-kahn.html>). This was featured on the "Brandeis Stories" website.)



We have a link to our ALL IN page with our action plans on our VoteDeis Campus Coalition website.

We publicize our NSLVE results and All IN recognitions in news items.

- See the to-be-updated VoteDeis news page here:
<https://www.brandeis.edu/dean-of-students/programs-and-events/vote-deis/events.html>
- And the updated ENACT news page here, which includes voting-related items:
<https://www.brandeis.edu/enact/news-updates/index.html>

Evaluation

Our most important measure of success will be NSLVE data showing greater voter registration and participation rates in 2024 when compared to 2020. We will then look to improve on the 2022 rates during the 2026 midterm elections.

We will find out if Brandeis University participates in the National Survey of Student Engagement, and if so we will analyze that data.

We are tracking engagement at voter registration tables. One way we are tracking this is by emailing people who stop by the table with the information relevant to their state and the VoteDeis contact info for questions they may have.

We are also tracking the numbers of people joining our ENACT Your Vote Brandeis Motivate site (<https://enactyourvote.link/brandeis>), and their rates of participation in challenges and in registering and making plans to vote. Additionally, our Motivate page includes questions being used by ENACT: The Educational Network for Active Civic Transformation to evaluate student engagement and sense of political efficacy, as part of comparative research we are undertaking.

at several ENACT partner schools. (See <https://www.brandeis.edu/enact/publications/research/index.html>).

We will measure attendance at sponsored events.

We will track new followers on social media platforms and engagement with posts.

We will use this data in the short term to inform what we post and what campus outreach we do. In the longer term we will use it to inform our plan for the following year, which may focus more on state and local elections, as well as the leadup to federal midterm elections.

We will be holding a debriefing session with the student leaders and lead volunteers and with the steering committee after the November election to evaluate our fall semester work while the experience is fresh, and to make recommendations for the rest of the academic year, and beyond. This is in part to ensure that future participants can learn from this experience even if some or all of the students, faculty, and staff involved are not still participating or on campus.

This debriefing session will be an important part of our qualitative data gathering. We will also survey students, asking specific questions about their awareness of VoteDeis and voting-related supports at Brandeis, as well as the effectiveness of our various strategies in raising awareness of these supports and of providing supports.

Additionally, VoteDeis is hosting a student-focused discussion with Dr. Danielle Allen in October ("[Finding Your Path in Community Action](#)") for which students are gathering questions from students. These questions will give us an indication of student engagement with VoteDeis as well.

Brandeis
VOTEDEIS

Join the Brandeis ENACT Your Vote site:
to get reminders to request ballots and
vote – and to encourage your friends
to vote!

(And earn points for
Brandeis swag!)



Join the non-partisan
VoteDeis Campus Coalition
to get help get out the vote at Brandeis!



Insta @VoteDeis
Email: VoteDeis@brandeis.edu