

Brandeis University 2020 Action Plan

Executive Summary:

The VoteDeis coalition was first created in Spring 2020 to increase voter registration and turnout at the Brandeis University campus in Waltham, MA. Since then, we have maintained our website (<https://www.brandeis.edu/dean-of-students/vote-deis/index.html>) and increased voter turnout from 72.3% in 2016 and 56.5% in 2018 to 86.4% in 2020. Our goal for this election is to maintain or increase turnout while emphasizing to students the importance of every election, including midterms.

VoteDeis is organized by the Dean of Students Office and ENACT (Educational Network for Active Civic Transformation: <https://www.brandeis.edu/ethics/ENACT/index.html>), a program of the International Center for Ethics, Justice and Public Life (<https://www.brandeis.edu/ethics/index.html>). Leigh Swigart and David Weinstein of the Ethics Center spearheaded the VoteDeis Campus Coalition, maintain the website, and monitor the dedicated email account and listserv. The student club for the VoteDeis coalition is led by Gabriella Lieberman, Mandy Feuerman, and Maia Lefferman.

Leadership:

Our VoteDeis campus coalition members can be found here:
<https://www.brandeis.edu/dean-of-students/vote-deis/coalition.html>

Commitment:

Our campus has signed the Higher Education Presidents' Commitment to Full Student Voter Participation

Our campus will communicate with students about the election by email and social media. We also want to make voter information available on websites used for academic activities (such as checking grades and registering for classes).

Landscape:

Our 2020 NSLVE Campus Report said the following:

- 81.6% of our eligible students are registered to vote
- 86.4% of our registered students voted
- 70.5% of our eligible students voted

All of these percentages have increased from 2016 to 2020.

Furthermore,

- 57% of undergraduate students voted

- 46% of graduate students voted
- The subject area with the lowest percentage of students who voted was business, with 45% voting
 - The subject area with the percentage number of students who voted was foreign language, with 80% voting

Goals:

Short Term

Our campus democratic engagement goals are:

- Maximize our number of registered voters for 2022 and 2024 elections
- Maximize our number of registered voters who actually vote in the 2022 and 2024 elections
- Ensure that all students who need help can easily access information and assistance regarding voting.
- Cultivate a culture of civic engagement and awareness

Long Term

- Cultivate a culture of civic engagement and awareness
- Create a campus-wide “Democracy Day”

Strategy:

Some of our initiatives to increase turnout will include:

Communications:

- Targeted emails to students based on their state sometime in August/September 2022 with information about how to register in their state and request their vote by mail ballot
- Sending out a campus-wide survey about voter habits to get more information
- Adding a voter registration link to regularly used university websites
- Further developing the VoteDeis Coalition website with more resources

Events:

- Vote By Mail Party
 - Make envelopes, stamps, and pens available to students so they can more easily fill out their absentee ballot. We will have someone there who can answer any questions to ensure that ballots are eligible.
 - There will be tables at the event organized state by state so students from the same state can do it together, ask each other questions, and sign off as witnesses when necessary.
 - To take place numerous times in September 2022
 - Fun merch/incentives like Brandeis-specific “I Voted” stickers, food, etc.
- Tabling in the International Business School in order to increase voter registration with business majors
 - Partnering with business-based clubs on campus to register members

Strategic Partnerships

- Cultivate partnerships with Department of Orientation, Brandeis Student Union, Brandeis Campus Activities Board (CAB), and other pertinent clubs to open up lines of communication and collaboration.
- Establish an initiative with Brandeis Student Union and Club Support that incentivizes all chartered clubs at Brandeis to be 100% registered.

We will also assist students by:

- Offering a notary service
- Providing stamps/envelopes
- Providing instructions on the VoteDeis website for how to register and make a plan to vote
- We will advertise these resources around campus and in emails sent out by university leadership

NSLVE:

Brandeis University has authorized NSLVE.

Evaluation:

We will evaluate the success of our action plan by considering

- Voter registration rate among eligible Brandeis voters
- Voting rate among registered Brandeis voters
- How different departments, grade-levels, and schools compare in voter registration/voting rates
- How many students are aware of VoteDeis resources
- Social media interactions with VoteDeis accounts

Reporting:

We will post our action plan and our campus NSLVE reports on our campus website.