



COLBY COLLEGE 2024 DEMOCRATIC ENGAGEMENT CAMPUS ACTION PLAN

DEVELOPED BY ELIZABETH JABAR LAWRY FAMILY DEAN OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This nonpartisan democratic engagement action plan was created by Colby College in Waterville, Maine, in preparation for the local, state, and federal 2024 elections. It aims to increase nonpartisan democratic engagement, student voter registration, education, and turnout in November 2024. Our campus action plan is focused on expanding and further strengthening efforts inside and outside the classroom and formalizing programs and partnerships with key campus constituents.

After reviewing Colby's NSLVE reports, Colby's 2022 ALL IN Action Plan Feedback Report, and qualitative data gathered from Colby Votes student leaders and Office of Civic Engagement staff, the following areas and opportunities were identified for 2024.

- **Increase engagement, visibility and communications from Colby Senior Administrative Leadership:**
 - While there is budget support from Senior Administrative Leadership, there is an opportunity to enhance campus messaging and impact campus culture by working with the President's Office and Communications to amplify and elevate Colby Votes
- **Expand and formalize nonpartisan democratic engagement in Orientation and First Year Experience Programs**
 - Establish formal programming and integrate voter registration into Orientation, Colby's newly launched First Year Journey curriculum, and co-curricular programs.
- **Formalize campus partnerships and embed sustainable co-curricular democratic engagement programs with Campus Life, Residential Education, Class Deans, and Student Government Association.**
 - Establish and sustain nonpartisan democratic engagement opportunities with an extended network of offices across campus and mobilize more student leaders.
- **Formalize faculty leadership, embed sustainable curricular democratic engagement and faculty-led co-curricular education opportunities, and increase faculty engagement overall.**
 - Secure faculty leadership and expertise to enhance Colby Votes co-curricular offerings and increase opportunities for in-classroom democratic engagement and collaboration with Colby Votes

LEADERSHIP

The Dean of Civic Engagement and Office of Civic Engagement and Community Partnerships lead the Colby Votes initiative. The Dean is responsible for facilitating the campus action plan, organizing the campus, working with student leaders and meeting campus voter engagement and education goals. The Dean of Civic Engagement is also responsible for recruiting students, faculty, and staff to the campus stakeholder group. In addition to NSLVE reports, the CE staff track co-curricular program data and provide yearly reports to the Dean of the College and the Provost. The following offices, programs and community partners will constitute the 2024 campus stakeholder group and contribute to advancing the campus action plan:

- Office of the President, Colby College
- Provost Office and Faculty, Colby College
- Dean of the College, Colby College
- Office of Civic Engagement and Community Partnerships, Colby College
- Colby Votes Student Fellows, Colby College
- Colby Votes Campus Organizers, Colby College
- Colby Votes Voting Captains, Colby College
- Campus and Residential Life, Colby College
- Dean of Students Office and First Year Journey, Colby College
- Goldfarb Center for Public Affairs, Colby College
- Colby College Libraries
- Office of Communications, Colby College
- Student Government Association, Colby College
- City of Waterville, Maine, Office of the City Clerk
- Maine Students Vote

The programs and offices above represent an expanded network of individuals and programs with significant and varied expertise, relationships and networks to advance Colby's campus action plan. Additionally, some Colby offices listed above have been underrepresented within our mobilization efforts and have missed opportunities to leverage their campus influence. We have outlined short-term and long-term tactics to involve members of those offices in our campus goals.

The Dean of Civic Engagement will work with up to three Colby Votes Student Fellows in the spring 2024 semester to assemble the new campus stakeholder group and develop campus mobilization efforts for fall 2024, as outlined in our campus goals. The Dean will meet weekly with the student fellows and provide oversight and guidance on work plans aligned with the Colby Votes campus action plan. The Dean of Civic Engagement is also working with a summer 2024 Colby Votes Student Fellow to further prepare for fall 2024.

In September 2024, the Dean of Civic Engagement will convene the new campus stakeholder group bi-weekly and work directly with four Colby Votes Student Fellows to lead Colby Votes and facilitate the campus action plan through the election season. Student Fellows will also meet weekly with Colby Votes Campus Organizers to guide and support their campus mobilization efforts and recruit and train Voting Captains across campus.

COMMITMENT

Educating students for lives of active citizenship and democratic engagement is core to the liberal arts mission of Colby College. Colby students are encouraged to “explore the relationships between academic work and one’s responsibility to contribute to the world beyond the campus and assume leadership roles as students and citizens”. Historically, civic learning has been part of the Colby curriculum and has expanded significantly with creating the Civic Engagement program in 2018. Curricular and co-curricular civic learning goals are framed within a set of *common understandings* developed by the Dean of Civic Engagement and Faculty and articulate the broad learning goals of democratic engagement at the college. The common understandings give faculty and staff clear learning outcomes and guidelines for developing new courses and co-curricular experiences that elevate civic learning and democratic engagement as a pervasive part of institutional culture.

Since 2018, the college has taken the following steps to demonstrate commitment to improving civic learning and democratic engagement:

- Established the Office of Civic Engagement and Community Partnerships, hiring three professional staff
- Created common understandings and civic learning goals for the college
- Signed onto NESAC Votes challenge
- Signatory to the Higher Education Presidents' Commitment to Full Student Voter Participation
- President Greene committed funding to the Office of Civic Engagement to support the initiative long-term, including paid student leadership positions, transportation to the polls, and campus event sponsorship
- Participation in NSLVE
- Staff serve as Deputy Registrars with the City of Waterville
- Student recognition at campus awards
- Integrated civic engagement into the First Year Journey curriculum
- Established a relational organizing model and paid student leadership positions for campus
- Created a Colby Votes campus website for students, faculty and staff to access voter and candidate information, including registration drives, voter registration FAQ, links to external resources, deadlines, transportation to the polls, events and opportunities to engage with Colby Votes

The following areas of improvement to *commitment* were identified in our 2022 ALL IN Action Plan Feedback Report and NSLVE and are addressed in our 2024 campus goals:

- Increase and elevate communication of Colby’s commitment to civic learning and democratic engagement from Senior Leadership within the institution, trustees, alumni, external stakeholders, and the general public

- Align Colby Votes more explicitly and visibly with Colby's diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice tenets, offices and programs.
- Secure faculty leadership to communicate, strengthen and expand Colby's commitment to civic learning and democratic engagement in the curriculum and faculty engagement with Colby Votes

LANDSCAPE

Colby's primary tool for data collection and assessment of political climate and democratic engagement on campus is NSLVE. Colby's data demonstrate positive trends in student democratic participation since 2014. Voter registration has increased from 64.8% in 2014 to 73.0% in 2018 and 93.1% in 2020. General election turnout also increased significantly to 83.8% in 2020.

A self-assessment of current work and data in collaboration with department heads, faculty, student government, student group leaders, student affairs staff, local election officials, and community partners must still be designed and implemented. A comprehensive assessment of that scale is a long-term goal requiring additional resources, departmental collaboration and staff time.

The Office of Civic Engagement has developed a strong relationship with the Waterville City Clerk. The Dean of Civic Engagement has served as a Deputy Registrar since 2020 and recruits an additional colleague to serve during the election season. This partnership aids the City Clerk in providing critical voter information to Colby students and creating access to voting for students who choose to vote in Maine with many for the first time.

Campus Organizing Model

Part of Colby Vote's success since 2019 was the creation of a relational organizing model and ladder of civic engagement in partnership with Maine Students Vote. In this model, student leaders work in various roles under the supervision of the Office of Civic Engagement to increase voter registration, education, and voting rates. Our campus has a civic action team led by paid student leaders and supported by Civic Engagement staff. The team meets regularly and receives support and training from the Office of Civic Engagement and Maine Students Votes. The campus action plan, NSLVE data, and an election engagement assessment define student leaders' work plans and goals.

The student leadership positions are Colby Votes Fellows, Campus Organizers and Voting Captains. The Fellows and Campus Organizers recruit student volunteers to be Voting Captains. Recruitment efforts target student club leaders, athletic teams, hall staff, and a general call to students. Each Voting Captain recruits their peer/teammates/roommates to be part of their Voting Squads. A Voting Squad has between 5-15 members and is recruited from a Captain's network. Voting Captains coordinate and mobilize Student Voting Squads and support students through a civic ladder of engagement: register to vote, make a plan to vote, understand what's on the ballot & share nonpartisan voting information, check in regularly, send election reminders around important deadlines, and vote.

Outside the Classroom

Colby Votes has a strong campus presence and high student engagement outside the classroom. The Office of Civic Engagement is situated in the Dean of the College Division alongside the offices and programs supporting student life outside academics. As such, Colby Votes has established working relationships with student clubs, organizations, and athletic teams. Additionally, Colby Votes has partnered with staff colleagues and student leaders in Campus Life and Residential Life. Still, staff turnover and the four-year student cycle have slowed progress toward institutionalizing democratic engagement programs in these areas. Work is still needed to solidify GOTV programs and civic learning opportunities within orientation, outdoor, and residential education.

Inside the Classroom

While the civic engagement common understanding document provides clear and distinct learning outcomes for faculty and staff, a corresponding assessment tool must be created and applied across campus. The civic engagement faculty advisory committee is drafting a new course designation for civic engagement or *CE*. This group will advance a proposal to the Provost and establish a straightforward process and system for recording and advertising civic engagement courses to all students. This designation will also aid in data tracking for courses connected to civic learning and democratic engagement.

Faculty who receive course development grants from the Office of Civic Engagement administer pre- and post-student self-assessment surveys on civic learning and civic dispositions. Additionally, applications for course development grants must specifically address and include the civic learning goals outlined in the common understanding document. The Dean of Civic Engagement and the civic engagement faculty advisory committee are working with the Provost and the Center for Teaching and Learning to provide pedagogical and professional development opportunities for faculty to increase the number of *CE* courses and develop assessment strategies and tools for these new courses.

NSLVE

Data from historical and current NSLVE reports inform our 2024 campus action plan and goals inside and outside the classroom.

Colby's data shows remarkable progress in student democratic participation since 2014. We've witnessed a steady climb in voter registration, from 64.8% in 2014 to 73.0% in 2018 and a staggering 93.1% in 2020. The general election turnout also significantly increased, reaching 83.8% in 2020. This positive trend sets the stage for our ambitious goal of achieving 100% student voter registration and increasing the voting rate of registered students by 5% in the next election cycle.

Voting, Registration and Yield Rates

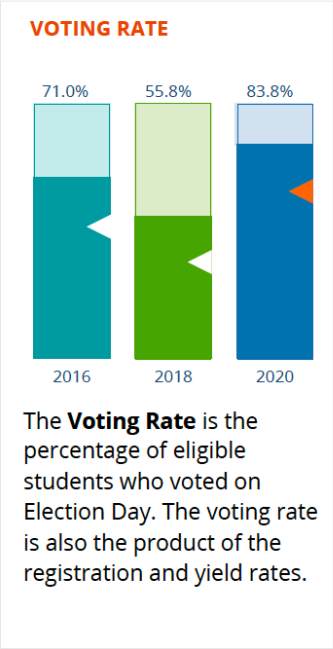
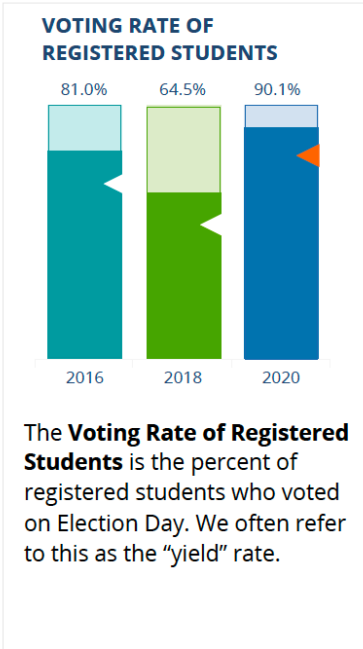
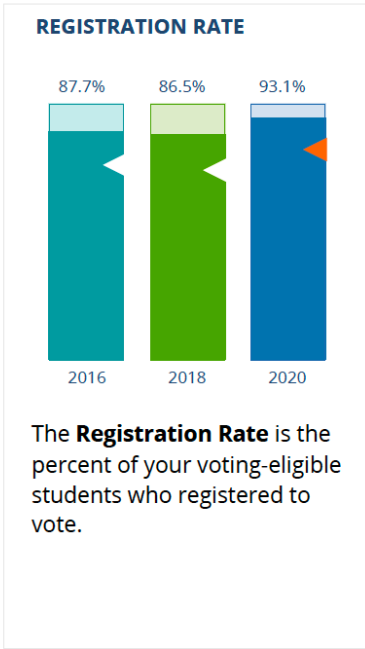
YOUR INSTITUTION

83.8%
2020 Voting Rate

+12.8
Change From 2016

ALL INSTITUTIONS

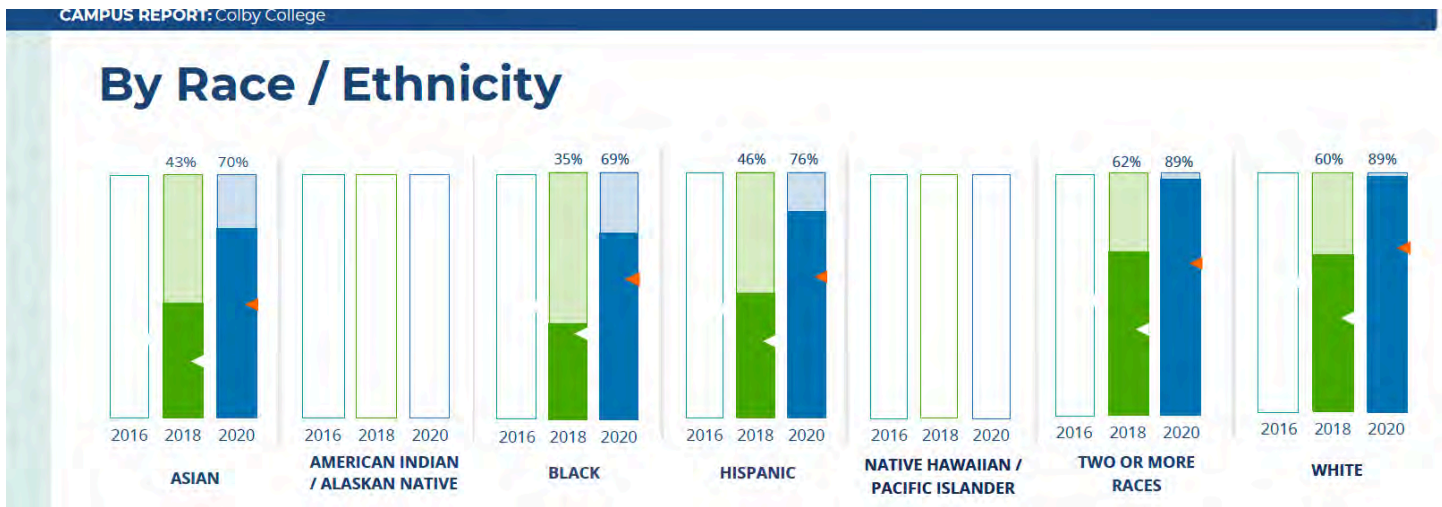
66%
2020 Voting Rate



While there has been significant improvement in specific fields of study, there is more opportunity to increase both voter registration and voting rates in the following areas that represent some of Colby's larger academic majors:

Academic Major	2016	2018	2020	2016	2018	2020	2016	2018	2020	Change
Mathematics and Statistics	64	24	38	65	30	46	74	49	66	↑ 29
Computer and Information Sciences	56	31	55	69	40	58	99	61	62	↑ 6

Colby has also seen a significant increase in registration and voting rates in the following demographics since 2016. These gains have been achieved by establishing intentional partnerships to foster a diverse campus stakeholder group and inclusive engagement strategies. Strengthening these relationships is a critical component of our campus goals for 2024.



Additionally, we see growth opportunities with first—and second-year students by more fully integrating Colby Votes into Orientation, the First-Year Journey Program, and the Class Dean’s advising model.

CLASS YEAR										
First Year	494	64	318	517	52	270	563	73	410	↑ 8
Second Year	508	67	339	521	55	284	523	77	402	↑ 10
Upper Level	966	61	585	858	59	504	1,072	79	846	↑ 18

CAMPUS GOALS

Goal: 100% student voter registration

- **Strategy & Tactics: institutional short-term, by next election**
- Train and mobilize Campus Organizers and Voting Captains to support voting squads through the ladder of civic engagement. Incorporate voter registration into new student Orientation programs
- Train COOT leaders to register student voters and connect to Colby Votes resources and voting information
- Train hall staff to register student voters and connect to Colby Votes resources and voting information
- Design and implement follow-up Colby Votes voter registration events with COOT leaders and their first-year groups
- Have two Colby staff serve as deputy registrars with the City of Waterville
- Implement peer to peer relational organizing model with paid student leadership positions
- Hold voter registration drives daily in the campus center
- Create voter registration stations in the campus libraries
- Work with faculty to schedule the 5 Minutes for Democracy presentation into courses
- Work with the Student Government Association to incorporate voter registration into fall campus events

Goal: Increase the voting rate of registered students by 5%

- **Strategy & Tactics: institutional short-term, by next election**
- Train and mobilize Campus Organizers and Voting Captains to support voting squads through the ladder of civic engagement
- Organize and provide transportation to the polls
- Organize Vote Early Days at City Hall
- Celebrate the Civic Holidays with campus events and communications
- Work with faculty to schedule the 5 Minutes for Democracy presentation into courses
- Create and share non-partisan voting and candidate information through social media and print via multiple Colby channels

- Organize non-partisan campus events with academic centres and departments, including debate watch parties and campus dialogues.

Goal: Establish a diverse campus stakeholder group

- **Strategy & Tactics: institutional short-term, by next election**
- Review NSLVE data for equity gaps and opportunities to diversify stakeholder group
- Incorporate the 2022 ALL IN Action Plan Feedback Report into the outreach plan
- Implement outreach plan and visibility campaign in the Spring 2024 semester
- Establish a consistent meeting schedule for the fall 24 semester leading to Election Day
- **Strategy & Tactics: institutional long-term, by the next two election cycles**
- Work with the Provost's office to secure faculty leadership
- Create a *Campus Commitment* sign-on for offices and departments across the college

Goal: Identify and engage faculty leadership and expertise to increase civic learning opportunities inside and outside the classroom

- **Strategy & Tactics: institutional short-term, by next election**
- Create a targeted outreach plan to Government faculty and Goldfarb Center for Public Affairs to engage relevant expertise and collaborate on co-curricular civic learning series in the fall 24 semester
- Work with faculty to schedule the 5 Minutes for Democracy presentation into all courses
- Secure faculty leadership and membership in the campus stakeholder group
- **Strategy & Tactics: institutional long-term, by the next two election cycles**
- Collaborate with faculty to adopt a student voting syllabus statement and voting assignment
- Create a faculty toolkit and digital resources to support student voting and civic learning

Goal: Develop a communication plan with the President's Office, Dean of the College, Provost and Office of Communications

- **Strategy & Tactics: institutional short-term, by next election**
- Ask the President to send a campus communication at the start of the fall term addressing the importance of electoral engagement and amplifying Colby Votes.
- Draft a series of campus communications with the Dean of the College in the summer of 2024 and establish a timetable that aligns with key dates.
- Work with DOC to advance the campus communication plan to Senior Leadership and the Office of Communications and solidify a timeline.
- **Strategy & Tactics: institutional long-term, by the next two election cycles**
- Ask the Office of Communications to share Colby Votes social media on Colby channels and highlight student leadership.
- Ask the Office of Communications to highlight the Civic Holidays and related Colby Votes events.

Goal: Co-design, co-create and implement sustainable voter registration and GOTV programs and education with the Office of Residential Life, including Orientation programs and the First Year Journey program

- **Strategy & Tactics: institutional short-term, by next election**
- Recruit and train hall staff to serve as voting captains
- Partner with hall staff across campus on GOTV programs and events

- Include student voter information and resources in the First Year Journey program newsletter, online classroom content, and academic advisor webpages.
- Table at new student resource fair and club fair during first week of fall term
- Identify fall tabling opportunities at first-year-specific events.
- Create student voting info, print materials, and Colby Votes swag to distribute to new students on move-in day.
- Work with the Registrar to create a how-to video on finding your campus address verification letter.

Goal: Formalize partnership with DEI Dean and align Colby Votes with DEI mission, goals, and programs

- **Strategy & Tactics: institutional short-term, by next election**
- Share NSLVE data with DEI Dean and review for equity gaps and identify opportunities
- Invite the DEI Dean to serve on the Colby Votes Stakeholder Committee
- **Strategy & Tactics: institutional long-term, by the next two election cycles**
- Share the CE common understandings document with the DEI Dean and identify alignment and gaps with the DEI mission, goals, and programs
- Work with the DEI Dean to collaborate on civic learning opportunities and campus programs to support campus action plans and goals

Goal: Formalize partnership with Class Deans and identify opportunities to align Colby Votes with their goals and programs

- **Strategy & Tactics: institutional short-term, by next election**
- Work with the Class Deans to include civic learning opportunities in their campus programs to support campus action plans and goals
- Share Colby Votes and student voter information through Class Dean list serves, newsletters, social media, and webpages
- Offer 5 Minutes for Democracy presentation at *Meet the Deans* fall info sessions

Goal: Implement peer to peer campus organizing model

- **Strategy & Tactics: institutional short-term, by next election**
- Hire and train four Colby Votes Fellows in the spring 2024 semester
- Hire and train 10 Campus Organizers in September 2024
- Recruit and train 50 Voting Captains
- Utilize Colby Votes custom campus voter registration portal from the All-In Democracy Challenge to collect data and track progress.
- Establish consistent meeting and planning schedules with Fellows and Organizers.
- Organize a mid-August meeting with Fellows to review the campus action plan and goals, draft September work plans

EVALUATION

The Dean of Civic Engagement will work with staff and faculty stakeholders and Colby Votes student

leaders to evaluate the impact and outcomes of our campus action plan and goals. Our evaluation process includes the following:

- Review and utilize historical and current NSLVE data to identify progress towards our goals, persistent or new equity gaps, and opportunities for increasing democratic engagement and student voter participation.
- Review and utilize data collected through our custom campus voter registration portal created by All-In.
- Work with the Center for Teaching and Learning and state and national partners to develop and administer post-election survey assessments on student voter engagement and attitudes about voting in 2024. Potential survey focus areas include voting resources and obstacles, attitudes about local, state, and national races and issues, and feelings about civic power, agency, and ability to make change.
- Work with the Center for Teaching and Learning and state partners to develop and conduct post-election student focus groups with various campus stakeholders.
- Record attendance in Colby Votes programs and events
- Record number of academic courses that held 5 Minutes for Democracy presentations, voting assignments, and syllabus statements.

REPORTING

The Dean of Civic Engagement will share and utilize the campus action plan to organize and guide the work of Colby Votes Fellows and Campus Organizers. Additionally, the Dean of Civic Engagement will meet with senior administration, including the Dean of the College and Provost, to review campus goals and strategies to engage faculty and staff. The campus action plan is also shared publicly using the following channels:

- Our campus action plan will be posted on our campus page on ALL IN's website: <https://allinchallenge.org/campuses/colby-college/>.
- Our NSLVE report is shared with the Office of Civic Engagement, the Office of the Provost, and the College President.
- Our campus action plan is shared with the Dean of the College
- Our institution has permitted ALL IN to publish our NSLVE reports on our campus page on ALL IN's website.