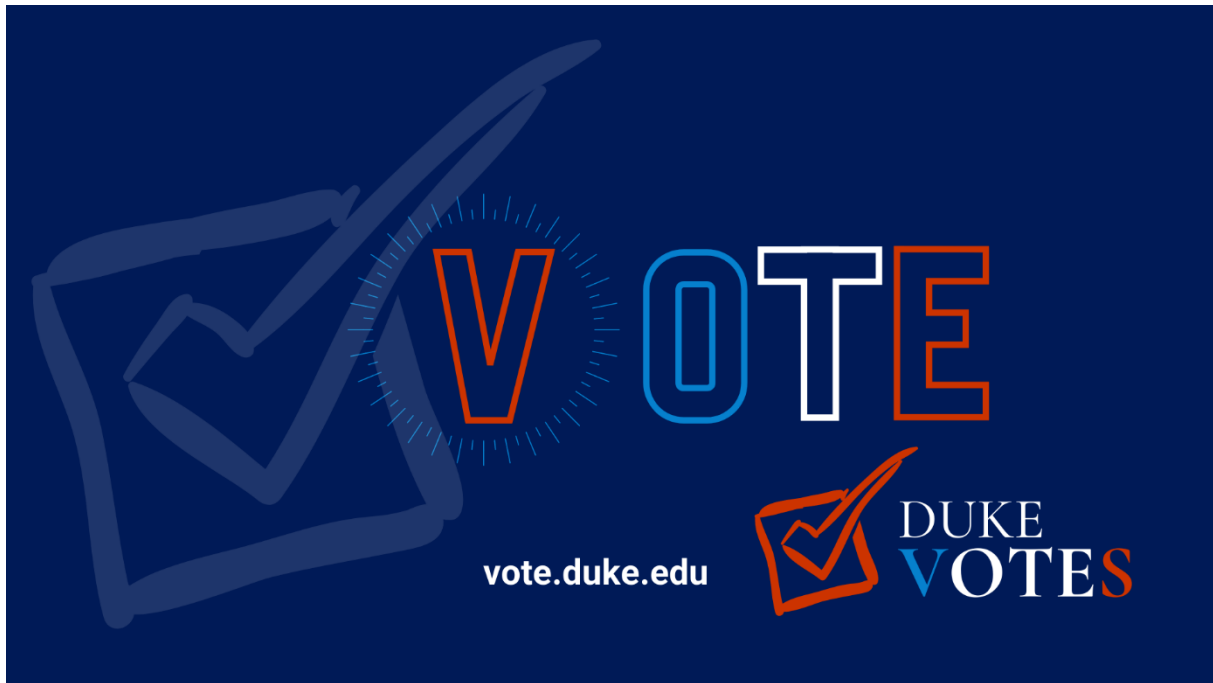


# 2022 Voting Action Plan – Duke University



## **Executive Summary**

Duke University has a long-standing commitment to increasing voter registration and turnout and providing opportunities for civic engagement for all students, faculty and staff. Proven systems and programs are in place to encourage active participation in democratic engagement activities both on campus and in the community. The purpose of this action plan is to outline goals and priorities for increasing voter registration, education and turnout among students, faculty and staff at Duke University in Durham, North Carolina. This plan will be implemented for the 2022-2023 academic year and updated each election cycle to reflect best practices and outcomes. Members of the Duke University Voting Cabinet created the Voting Action Plan, and the Voting Cabinet and Duke Votes student organization are responsible for overseeing the implementation of the plan on campus.

## **Leadership**

Duke University created a Voting Cabinet in 2020 consisting of membership from the offices of Government Relations, University Communications, Student Affairs, Event Services, Community Affairs, Human Resources, Undergraduate Education, faculty members, students and others. The Voting Cabinet meets regularly leading up to elections to guide decisions to increase voter engagement on campus, working together with Duke Votes on priorities and initiatives. The Voting Cabinet is representative of a wide array of departments across campus and is inclusive of a diverse group of stakeholders. In addition to our campus and health system partners, the Voting Cabinet collaborates with the local board of elections and many nonpartisan voter

engagement groups (ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge, NC Campus Compact, Vot-ER, You Can Vote, Campus Election Engagement Project, TurboVote, NC Young People's Voting Alliance). Voting Cabinet membership will be reviewed and updated each election cycle, ensuring that membership is representative and inclusive of Duke's diverse constituencies across campus.

Voting Cabinet members:

- Chris Simmons, Interim Vice President, Public Affairs and Government Relations
- Erin Kramer, Assistant Vice President, Media and Public Affairs
- Jonah Perrin, Duke Votes Student Chairman (student member)
- Blyth Morrell, Assistant Vice President, Digital and Brand Strategy
- Doug Heron, Associate Vice President, Duke State Relations
- Katie Lipe, Assistant Director, Duke State Relations
- Leslie Barnes, Associate Athletics Director
- John Blackshear, Associate Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education and Dean of Students
- Landy Elliott, Assistant Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education - Strategic Initiatives and Communications
- Jim Hodges, Director, Duke Event Services
- Leanora Minai, Executive Director of Communications, Office of Communication Services
- Sam Miglarese, Deputy Chief Administrator, Durham and Community Affairs
- Eric Mlyn, Faculty, Sanford School of Public Policy
- Adaobi Onunkwo, Director of External Advocacy, Duke Graduate and Professional Students (student member)
- Leslie Parkins, Assistant Vice President and Director for Civic Engagement
- Deondra Rose, Faculty, Sanford School of Public Policy and Director of POLIS: Center for Politics
- Katie McKittrick, Chief of Staff, Duke University Health System Human Resources

Additionally, the Voting Cabinet created a subcommittee on communications that meets on a bi-weekly basis to create and plan voting communications initiatives across campus.

### **Commitment**

2020 was the first year Duke University initiated a comprehensive communications plan and strategy for voter engagement. The coordinated effort between the Voting Cabinet and Duke Votes was well-received and successful in increasing voter turnout and encouraging democratic engagement on campus. The University community provided great feedback on the unified approach and it wouldn't have been possible without support from University leadership who made democratic engagement a top priority for all students, faculty and staff.

During election season, President Vincent Price and various members of Duke's leadership team sends informational emails on several occasions to promote voter registration and participation. President Price signed the ALL IN President's Commitment to Full Voter Participation, demonstrating Duke's commitment to prepare students to become responsible and engaged

participants in our democracy and encouraging the right and duty to register and to vote. Duke University Men's Basketball Coach, Jon Scheyer, also signed the Coaches' Voter Engagement Pledge to support nonpartisan voter engagement efforts with student-athletes on campus. Duke's civic engagement efforts are further highlighted in the Duke Academic Strategic Plan in alignment with the university's overarching vision to "grow, connect, and empower diverse and inclusive communities of excellence to enhance the creation, delivery, and translation of knowledge for a rapidly changing world."

Students, faculty and staff are interested in democratic engagement efforts on campus and participate in a variety of different activities through Duke Votes and other organizations. Other examples that demonstrate Duke's commitment to civic learning and democratic engagement include:

- Coordinated a strategic communications plan for voter registration and voting information (social media posts, mass communications to students, faculty and staff, frequent Duke Today news stories).
- Created a Duke Votes website with voting resources for students, faculty and staff.
- Multiple political clubs and student organizations on campus focus on democratic and civic engagement.
- Duke frequently hosts educational events, town halls, research projects and forums on democratic engagement issues.
- Duke has an on-campus early voting location.
- Campus leaders promote voting through communications (mass emails to students, faculty and staff, video messages, social media posts).
- Duke Votes student-led initiatives:
  - o Multiple voter registration tables across campus.
  - o Text banking to remind students about voter registration deadlines and voting dates.
  - o Seasonal events ("Voting Isn't Spooky" event on Halloween during the early voting period).
  - o Couch parties – competitions between other universities to register students to vote.
  - o "Dorm Storm" events – posting voting information cards on dorm room doors.
  - o Painted a bridge on campus with a Duke Votes graphic and voting information.
  - o Created a pledge for student groups to commit to 100% of members registering to vote and voting.
  - o Coordinated apartment voting ambassadors to disseminate voting information to students living off-campus.
  - o Frequent emails and social media posts to Duke Votes subscribers.
  - o Trained student leaders to assist with voter registration efforts.
  - o Created a video for professors to show their students with details on registering to vote and voting information, and also coordinated in-person presentations to classes.

- Duke Athletics teams had 100% voter registration and turnout in 2020 and posted pictures on social media.
- Signage around campus promotes voter registration and election dates (digital signage in buses and buildings, decals on walls, voting information postcards in high-traffic areas across campus).
- Staff voter registration events were held in convenient locations across campus geared toward dining, facilities management, and grounds staff.
- Duke University School of Medicine students and clinical staff collaborated with Vot-ER to provide medical badge-backers with voter registration QR codes.

In 2022, Duke Votes and the NC Young People Voting Alliance also hosted “Duke Democracy Day” – a variety of activities aimed at motivating students and other members of the Duke community to vote in the midterm elections. Democracy Day featured prominent national speakers on the importance of voting, elections and the state of democracy, scheduled walks to the polls, an event to highlight community and civic engagement activities beyond voting, mural paintings to create an interactive Democracy Wall at the Nasher Museum of Art at Duke, and a conversation with local elected officials to discuss the importance of local civic action. This is one of many examples where the Duke University community came together to show a commitment to civic and democratic engagement.

### **Landscape**

The following table provides a brief overview of the demographics of Duke’s student population. This information is based on data collected from Fall 2021.

<b>Undergraduate</b>	<b>Graduate</b>	<b>Undergrad - NC Residents</b>	<b>Undergrad - Men</b>	<b>Undergrad - Women</b>
6,789	9,991	18%	45%	55%

<b>African-American</b>	<b>Asian-American</b>	<b>Hispanic/Latino</b>	<b>Caucasian</b>	<b>Nonresident Alien</b>	<b>Two or More Ethnicities</b>	<b>Unknown</b>
8%	21%	11%	40%	9%	6%	5%

Duke University offers a robust learning experience for students, providing programs and services that support the optimal growth of Duke students, enhance their intellectual, social, cultural and physical development, and complement Duke’s academic excellence by providing opportunities for students to experience education and explore interests beyond the classroom. Duke University is home to 400+ recognized student organizations that foster student interaction and exchange, exploration of a variety of interest areas, understanding of the principles of organizational structure and management, and development of valuable collaboration, leadership, and communication skills. Duke also supports many centers and

organizations on campus involved with democratic and civic engagement activities and research, such as Duke Votes, Polis: Center for Politics, Hart Leadership Program, Bass Connections and the Office of Civic Engagement, among others.

## **Goals**

The Voting Cabinet at Duke University hopes to achieve several short-term and long-term goals in the future, with a focus on increased voter registration and voter turnout levels among students, faculty and staff.

### **Short-Term Goals (2022-2023)**

- Increase midterm election registration rate by 15 percentage points in 2022 (60.9% in 2018).
- Increase midterm election voter turnout rate by 35 percentage points in 2022 (39.3% in 2018).
- Integrate voter registration as part of the first-year orientation process.
- Implement student survey on voting activities.
- Implement Voting Cabinet post-election survey.

### **Long-Term Goals (2022-2023 and Beyond)**

- Ensure that every student is touched by a voter registration effort.
- Increase voter registration rate by 10 percentage points (79% in 2020).
- Increase voter turnout rate by 25 percentage points (70.9% in 2020).
- Integrate voter registration in the course registration process.
- Add representation to the Voting Cabinet from more diverse groups on campus (additional faculty, representation from marginalized/minority student organizations).
- Incorporate civic learning and democratic engagement learning objectives into the general education curriculum.

## **Strategy**

Below is a strategy for how these goals will be brought to life in the coming months and years.

- Train Resident Advisors and Faculty in Residence on the voter registration process. Provide each representative with voter registration materials and resources.
- Set up voter registration tables at dorm check-in locations for first-year students during the orientation process.
- Plan a comprehensive communications strategy and timeline to disseminate voting information to the Duke community (themes for each week leading up to the election, social media posts, news stories, signage, etc).
- Hold weekly voter registration events and tabling in advance of the voter registration deadline.

- In addition to voter registration efforts for students, coordinate voter registration events for faculty and staff. Focus on reaching staff during shift changes and in commonly visited areas on campus.
- Plan voter registration events at student and employee flu clinic sites, staff appreciation football games, etc.
- Support the continuation of student-led Duke Votes events and initiatives (referenced above).
- Convene the Voting Cabinet and the Communications Subcommittee on a regular basis.
- Provide voter registration resources for professors to share with students.
- Involve leaders on campus (emails from President Price and senior leadership, photos of leaders voting).
- Engage with the Registrar's office to incorporate voter registration as part of the course registration process.

### **National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) Data**

Duke University received access to the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) data for 2020. In 2020, Duke's registration rate was 79%. In comparison to the data from 2016, this rate increased by 10.8%. Duke's voting rate was 70.2% in 2020, showing a 14.5% increase from 2016. The voting rate among registered students in 2020 was 88.8%, up from 81.6% in 2016. During the 2020 election year, Duke's voting rate was higher than the national average 66%. Many students chose to vote by absentee ballot or during the early voting period, with only 356 students voting in-person on Election Day. 65% of undergraduate students and 52% of graduate students voted in the 2020 election. The Voting Cabinet will utilize these trends, metrics and information to tailor our voting communications and events accordingly.

### **Reporting and Evaluation**

Duke University's voting action plan will be posted on the public Duke Votes website once finalized, along with the most updated NSLVE data. The action plan will be reviewed throughout the election season to ensure the Voting Cabinet's actions are consistent with the goals and priorities outlined in the plan. After the election, the Voting Cabinet will revisit the goals outlined in the plan to identify what was achieved or not achieved, and will use this information to adjust short-term and long-term goals accordingly. The Voting Cabinet will catalogue all communications initiatives, communications metrics (news stories, social media engagement, email messages from leadership, etc.), participation in voter registration events and educational programming, and general feedback to measure progress and evaluate the success of various initiatives. NSLVE data will also be evaluated each election cycle to measure voter participation rates among students.