



Developed by: Megan Canfield & the Hollins University committee

The Hollins University Voting Coalition, comprised of staff, faculty, student, and community representatives, operates as a nonpartisan group dedicated to educating the undergraduate student community about voter registration processes and fostering engagement. This action plan delineates our goals and strategies for student voter engagement, education, and turnout, with an initial focus on all primary and general elections. Our objective is to offer substantial opportunities for students to register to vote, regardless of political affiliation and to educate our population on the differing ways in which one can cast a ballot and provide information on how to do so. Developed for the 2024 election, this nonpartisan democratic engagement plan is an ongoing effort led by Hollins University. The coalition, in collaboration with on-campus and off-campus partners, will oversee planning, implementation, and evaluation.

As a living document, the plan will be regularly updated throughout the 2024-2025 academic year and beyond to reflect new opportunities, changes, and outcomes. The plan's purpose is to enhance nonpartisan democratic engagement, student voter registration, education, and turnout in the 2024 election as well as future elections. The specific goals include creating educational content for our students such as creating a document for our students on how they can register to vote in Virginia, specific information for our students who are registered in Virginia to vote by mail, sharing voting information at student government and organization meetings, and creating an informative "ad campaign" led by our student representatives for their peers on why voting in all elections matters and how to research information on candidates and measures on their ballots. Additionally, within the next few years, the plan aims to understand and address barriers faced by students when voting, continue to provide free transportation to local polling places for registered residential students and to expand our infographics to include the top states outside of Virginia our students hail from. The plan also emphasizes educating students on key election issues.

### **Leadership**

The voting coalition committee is led by Megan Canfield, Assistant Dean of Students, and is supported by Tiffany Hinton, Associate Vice President for Belonging and Chief Title IX Officer. Staff and faculty members of the committee are invited to join

based on their known passion for democratic engagement and/or because they bring helpful insights generally, or specifically in the context of Hollin’s culture and location. We will continue to make efforts to recruit faculty within our Political Science Department and to make sure we have a representative from our Athletic Department to act as an additional liaison with our student athletes. Student members are generally students with strong participation in campus life such as holding an elected position in the student government like our SGA Secretary, the SGA leader of our BIPOC Support and Action committee, and within student-led social justice groups on campus such as the Feminist Majority Leadership Alliance (FMLA). Our primary community partner is the League of Women Voters of the Roanoke Valley, a strong ally in striving our goals remain nonpartisan.

As students graduate and professionals leave the University, some positions are required as part of the job description to serve in these efforts and will continue to do so such as our Assistant Dean of Students, Associate Vice President, and Manager of Student Activities. For our student members where their position on this committee is not linked to their role, we will make active efforts each semester via personally reaching out as well as speaking at student government meetings to attract new talents. Participation on this committee is tied to the roles held by our SGA secretary, BIPOC Support and Action Chair, and our FMLA president.

**Voting Coalition Leadership Team**

Full Name	Department	Title	Designation
Megan Canfield	Student Success, Well-being and Belonging	Assistant Dean of Students	Staff
Dr. Tiffany Hinton	DEIB	Associate Vice President for Belonging and Chief Title IX Officer	Staff

Currently Open	Student Success, Well-being and Belonging	Manager of Student Activities and Organizations	Staff
Maryke Barber	Library	Information Literacy and Outreach Librarian	Staff/Faculty
Dr. Ashleigh Breske	Global Politics and Societies	Assistant Professor	Faculty
Holly Rudolph	Student Success, Well-being and Belonging	Student Success, Well-being, and Belonging Administrative Assistant	Staff
Mallary Meyer	Athletics	Head Swim Coach; Physical Education Instructor	Staff/Faculty
Jessica Batty-McMillan	Communication Studies	Visiting Lecturer	Faculty
Sofia Sosa Olivares	SGA	Student Government Association (SGA) Secretary	Student
Jen Alvarez	SGA	SGA BIPOC Support and Action Chair	Student
Jay Garcia	SGA	President of the Feminist Majority Leadership Alliance	Student
Sharon	Community Partner	League of Women Voters of the Roanoke Valley	Community/National Organization

Kenidee Rabenstein Florence Green Alexandra Mitchell Corabeth Pierce Erin Masarjian Victoria Slick Logan Lynxwiler Mia Cacucciolo Ava Kegler		General Student Representatives	Students
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**Commitment**

*Hollins University is dedicated to academic excellence, creativity, belonging, and preparing students for lives of purpose. Hollins provides an outstanding and academically rigorous undergraduate liberal arts education for women and entrepreneurial and innovative graduate programs for all in a gender-inclusive environment. We lift our eyes, Levavi Oculos, to create a just future as we build on our past. - Hollins University Mission Statement (updated August 2023)*

Under the guidance of President Mary Dana Hinton, Ph.D., Hollins University unveiled its updated mission statement at the beginning of the 2023-2024 academic year. This coincided with the start of the [Levavi Oculos Strategic Plan](#), with the intention that, by 2030, the university will become the nation’s leader in economic, social, and civic mobility. President Hinton believes that unrestricted civic engagement is integral to building a just future, as declared in our university mission statement. As the University strategic plan continues to develop, there may be opportunities for enhancing civic responsibility with the curriculum. In August 2022 she called the Student Success, Well-being and Belonging (SSWBB) division to action for implementing strong, concrete processes to ensure this standard within the culture of the university. Two staff members were appointed within the SSWBB division to lead the process for joining the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE). In fall of 2023, the university formed the university’s first voting coalition with the intention to complete the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge. As of December 2023, President Hinton has signed the ALL IN Higher Education Presidents’ Commitment to Full Student Voter Presentation taking on the responsibility to ensure that students are adequately prepared to participate in democratic processes.

At this time, the University does not cancel classes on any election days, however support is offered by encouraging students to vote early, vote by mail, and shuttles are in operation for several hours each election day so that students may access the polls as it fits their scheduled. The official voting location is 1.4 miles away from the university campus for those registered with a campus address.

Members of the committee have worked to create displays within the student center to highlight information regarding voting and will continue to do so in the 24-25 academic year and beyond. As part of our goals and action steps, we plan to continue to speak with students groups beyond just presidential elections to continue to keep voter engagement in the forefront of students minds.



As we are new partners with ALL IN, we are fortunate to have already received some recognition. [A press release was created](#) by our marketing and communication department and was shared out to the campus community. This trend will continue should we receiving any future recognition. Additionally in future presentations to student government meetings and other student groups, we will share any recognitions received as well as post them on the SGA website on our university intranet.

## **Landscape:**

Voter registration in the Commonwealth is open to eligible voters up to 22 days before an election for general and primary elections, 14 days for a special election, and seven days before a special election if called by the Governor. Presently, Voter ID laws in the Commonwealth of Virginia do not restrict eligible voters from voting if they appear at a polling location without a picture ID. According to the Virginia Department of Elections, those who appear to vote without an ID are instructed to sign an ID statement affirming one's identity after which they are able to vote with a regular ballot. Should one choose to not sign an ID statement to affirm identity one may vote a provisional ballot and be provided instructions to ensure their vote will count.

Presidential, congressional, and town precinct elections will simultaneously take place on November 5, 2024.

## **School Background**

Hollins University maintains a passionate student body and was named by The Princeton Review as [one of the Top 10 Most Politically Active Campuses](#). Hollins students are generally educated about political causes and understand the importance of civic engagement. However, there can appear to be a disconnect in the time between registering to vote and casting a vote for election day. The Office of Student Activities and Organizations at Hollins offers two services in the fall to assist student voting efforts. The first of these is a series of voter registration tables situated in the lobby of the campus dining hall including ones in conjunction with Constitution Day and National Voter Registration Day. Members of the Voting Coalition, often accompanied by a representative of the local chapter of the League of Women Voters, table sit for a lunch period in September and October as students return to campus answering questions and helping students hoping to vote locally to register with paper forms or electronically via our ALL IN website link. The Office of Student Activities and Organizations also offers an annual free shuttle to the polling location designated to voters using campus as a voting address. This shuttle runs for a minimum of four hours on Election Day. We plan to continue this for students in '24-'25.

## **Local Voting**

There is one polling location that serves the Hollins campus being the Hollins Public Library located a little less than two miles away. This polling location is designated for students who wish to vote in Roanoke County, Virginia based on their

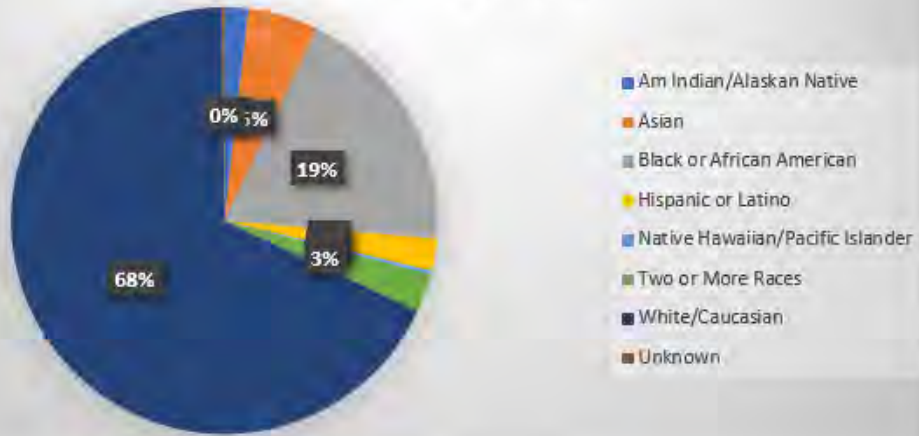
residential address on campus. Others have registered to vote in Virginia yet failed to register in Roanoke County and were unable to vote after taking the election day shuttle to the Hollins polling location.

### **Our campus demographic and voting data:**

Since 1842, Hollins University has existed as one of the oldest higher education institutions for women in the United States and was proudly the first chartered women's college in the state of Virginia. While historically undergraduate degrees were to only be granted to female students, Hollins now offers several graduate programs, which are coeducational. Hollins University is a private 4-year institution which joined the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge in 2022. Today, Hollins is made up of an increasingly diverse population of students including 665 female undergraduate students and 108 coed graduate students as of the start of the 2024-2025 academic year. Thirty-eight American states are represented by the student body and the university hosts a population of international students hailing from 17 different countries this year. Hollins is also a predominantly white institution with women of color making up 32% of the current undergraduate student population.

Hollins maintains a reputation as a strongly residential campus with 80% of students choosing to reside on campus in the residence halls. Within the past year, however, commuter students have proved to be an emerging group within the student population. This increase in commuter students is helped by the implementation of the Hollins Opportunity for Promise through Education (HOPE) scholarship program created by President Hinton. This scholarship is available to female high school seniors residing in the Roanoke Valley desiring a college degree. If chosen as a recipient, HOPE scholars may then attend Hollins University for four years with the cost of tuition fully covered.

### HU Racial Demographics



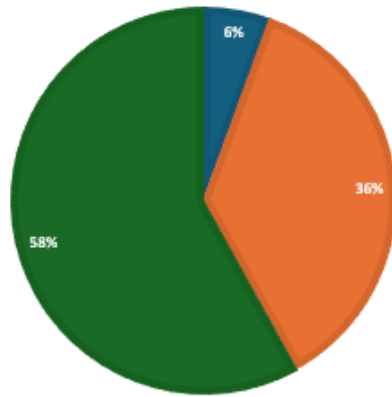
### Residential Status



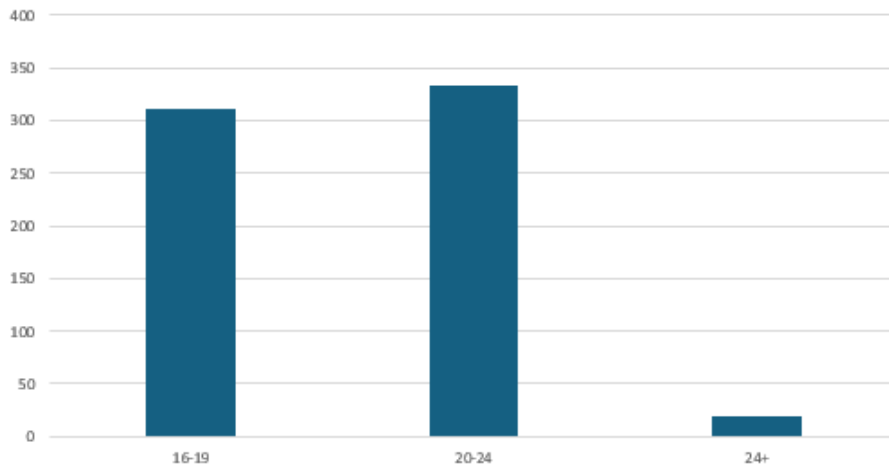


### RESIDENTIAL STATUS OF HU STUDENTS

International F-1 VISA    Out of State Resident    In-State (VA) Resident



### HU Students by Age



## Campus Demographics

As of Fall 2022, Hollins University has authorized the National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) and will receive campus voting data for the 2022 election in fall 2023. Our NSLVE authorization runs through 2033.

As evidenced by our NSLVE data as well as personal experience, much of our student population prefers to vote early or by mail as opposed to on election days. We have made strong efforts this year to incorporate more information including within our goals regarding how students can vote by mail to support these changing student behaviors. Now that a full committee has been formed, we are looking to expand our educational opportunities and the services we can provide to our students beyond what we were limited to by manpower historically. Our NSLVE data has also highlighted

some of the racial disparity of our students who choose to vote and we plan to utilize the services of our students of color on the committee as well as our SGA representatives to help target and support our students and ideally close these gaps. Our secondary contact is also the leader of our Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging office and is strongly connected with students who are participants in programs tied into her office such as our First-Generation students, our racial minority students, and our adult learner population.

Our goal of creating the ad campaign can be more targeted to the audiences we seek as well as our plan to intentionally make efforts to present to clubs related to underrepresented students.

### **Barriers to Voting**

A recurring issue involved students taking the shuttle to the polling location only to discover they were unable to vote as they had used their home address to register. This is most common among in-state students who desire to vote not in their home county but in Roanoke County, but had not registered with a local address. Anecdotal data from students also expresses confusion about voting by mail processes. The voting coalition recognizes this as a key issue and a Fall 2023 survey released by the Office of Student Activities and Organizations identified that voting by mail far surpassed the rate of students voting in person based on self-reported data from students.

While the voting coalition hopes to formulate annual surveys to be distributed to the study body to gather data about barriers to voting, we presently work with an anecdotal data set to identify areas of focus.

### **Goals**

Long term goals of the voting coalition seek to increase the education we provide to our students in terms of how to register to vote and how to vote, not only in Virginia but also expanding to include information regarding the top three to five states our students come from within the next five to seven years. Our NSLVE data shows that there is an increasing number of students looking to vote by mail and we would like to provide information, should they choose to vote in this manner. Should the committee be able, we would also like to look into starting a chapter of the League of Women Voters on our campus. Within the next one to three years, we as a coalition want to provide at least four presentations to student groups per year which could include our

Resident Assistants, Student Government meetings, our first-year foundation classes (which are required for all first-years to take), and specific student organizations.

Short term goals of the coalition within the next year are primarily focused on education, specifically to quell confusion about the voting process and options in general and to begin to build a culture of our students thinking about voting practices beyond just presidential elections.

Our institution's nonpartisan democratic engagement goals are:

- Goal 1: By October 4<sup>th</sup>, 2024 the coalition will create a one-page info sheet on the vote by mail process for those registered in Virginia that includes at least at least 5 key takeaways. We will ensure it is as accessible as possible (including on screen readers) and plan to solicit feedback on its effectiveness from students and update it accordingly.
  - Within the next three to five years, we want to expand to create info-sheets for the top three to five states our students hail from.
- Goal 2: By October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2024 the coalition will create a one page info sheet specific to registering to vote in Roanoke County that includes at least 4 key takeaways and important registration deadlines. We will ensure it is as accessible as possible (including on screen readers) and plan to solicit feedback on its effectiveness from students and update it accordingly.
  - Within the next three to five years, we want to expand to create info-sheets on how to register to vote for the top three to five states our students hail from including deadlines specific to those states.
- Goal 3: By August 31<sup>st</sup>, 2024, the coalition will create a ten-slide educational presentation that helps educate students on how to request a mail-in ballot, why voting matters, how to register to vote and check one's status, important deadlines, and more. This presentation will be delivered at least twice in the 24-25 academic year before May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025.
  - Within the next three to five years, we want to expand to present at least four times per academic year.
- Goal 4: By April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2025 the students of the committee will create a student focused "ad-campaign" that includes at least social media content and printed materials aimed at highlighting why voting matters, highlighting the importance of voting in mid-term, primary, and both state and local elections, and how to find information on candidates and measures on ballots. We will work to ensure the campaign reaches at least three hundred students during

academic year 25-26. We will involve a diverse group of students in the planning and execution of this campaign to represent the breadth of the Hollins Student body.

- o As shown by our NSLVE data and the 2022 mid-term voting rate of 33.8% of students, the rate of Hollins students voting dramatically decreases during mid-term years. By highlighting the importance of voting in general we hope to increase this percentage by at least ten percentage points by 2026.

Hollins University will implement the strategies below to increase nonpartisan democratic engagement and student voter participation. Hollins University will use an institution-branded voter registration portal from ALL IN to register students to vote and track voter registration data through the portal.

**Strategy 1: Improving voter education practices on campus.**

Action Item	When will it occur?	Outcomes and Indicators
Direct students towards information on candidates' positions and measures on ballots	At minimum, four times per year via displays, info sheets, tabling, and presentations	Reaching a broader audience of students at once via multiple avenues
Increase the number of voter registration opportunities on campus to at least 5 in the fall semester and 2 in the spring semester	By December 1, 2024 for the fall and April 30, 2025 for the spring	More opportunities to reach students and encourage them to register beyond just in preparation for the presidential election
Start a chapter of League of Women Voters on campus	By end of the 2030 academic year	Encourage direct student participation in civic practices
Expand current voter deadline promotion to include top 3 states represented within the student body	By end of the academic year 2027	Develop using home address data for students to track top 3 states

Create an educational presentation about voter registration processes.	By August 31, 2024	Familiarize students with the voting process and important deadlines. Survey students after each presentation to gauge the helpfulness of information provided.
Develop a one-page info sheet on how to vote in VA.	October 15, 2024	Make it easy and clearer for students to see steps. Will survey students who register to vote locally to gauge usefulness.

**Strategy 2: Encouraging student participation on election days.**

Action Item	When will it occur?	Outcomes and Indicators
Organize Presidential debate (as per scheduled) and election night watch parties in campus common spaces in collaboration with campus partners	Fall 2024 (recurring every four years as scheduled)	Vitalize student interest in specific election stakeholders and increase knowledge of each candidate's platform
Continue to provide transportation to the designated polling location for voters on campus	Yearly for elections being held locally during September-May	Encourage civic engagement of students without the means to drive themselves
Organize pre-stamped envelopes for students looking to request by mail a vote-by-mail ballot	Receive all student requests by October 22, 2024	Remove a potential financial barrier to students seeking mail-in ballots

**Overarching Approach**

The voting coalition will focus on rolling out simple yet highly visible calls to action and an educational presentation for students. The messaging will be crafted to breakdown the voting process for students making it easier for them to navigate what can feel like an overwhelming undertaking.

Students will be encouraged to customize a step-by-step plan which highlights key decision making junctures and considers the following:

1. Where should I register — at Hollins or my permanent address?

2. What are the key voting deadlines for my voting region?
3. Which candidates are on the ballot and what are their platforms?
4. How will I cast my ballot — in person or by mail?
5. If I decide to vote in person, where's my polling place? When will I go and how will I get there? What do I need to bring with me?
6. Where can I search if I have questions or run into problems?

## **Reporting**

At present, a copy of the most recent version of the action plan will be shared on the Student Government Association page of the Hollins University intranet. As our plan is accepted or altered we will share newer versions. We additionally have available our most recent NSLVE report. As we are better able to confirm and build out data and the needs of our voting population, this information will also be shared on the Student Government Association page.

## **Evaluation**

Hollins University will use the National, Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement to evaluate the increase of student voting by comparing our campus voter turnout and voter registration rates to past elections to measure progress on increasing both. This data is crucial in helping us achieve some of our stated goals such as increasing participation rates and identifying key groups to engage. We also plan to supplement this data with more immediate data from our ALL IN voter registration portal dashboard to track the number of students who have started and completed their voter registration more quickly. A copy of the most recent version of the action plan is shared on the [Student Government Page of the Hollins University intranet](#), which is accessible to all members of our university community in addition to highlighting any awards or recognition we may receive. Additionally, our action plan will be shared on ALL IN's website <https://allinchallenge.org/campuses/hollins-university/>. Furthermore, our institution has given ALL IN permission to publish our past NSLVE reports, which will be found on our campus page above. Voter registration data will be added to the data pool shared by SSWBB to the President's Office at the end of each semester.

Through several of our stated short-term goals to create educational material, we intentionally plan to seek out feedback from our students as stakeholders in this work and edit our materials to make them more effective. This plan also leaves us with room beyond academic year 2024-2025 to set new goals for ourselves as we achieve our

current ones based on the needs we see in our community and the ideas generated by the members of our coalition, in particular our students.

The committee has plans to meet monthly during the academic year and more frequently as needed depending on specific needs for upcoming elections. Thus far, meeting time is largely used to discuss and evaluate past successes and failures in order to best determine how the voting coalition can serve the campus community. Evaluation of the voting coalition's work and progress toward stated goals will be an ongoing process. In this way, the plan will be a living document, updated regularly to reflect successes, lessons learned, and new opportunities.