



Massachusetts Institute of Technology Democratic Engagement Action Plan: AY2023 and Beyond

This plan was created using the Votes & Ballots Action Planning Form. We highly recommend editing and expanding upon this draft before submitting for review.

Throughout this document, we mention the Strengthening American Democracy Guide as a resource for your review. We encourage you to turn to that resource for guidance and support as you complete your action plan!

I. Executive Summary

This action plan was developed by Aaron Weinberger, Special Advisor to the Vice President to communicate our strategy for increasing both the registration and turnout rates of voters at Massachusetts Institute of Technology. The planned activities outlined here will be carried out over AY2023 and Beyond, on and around our campus in Cambridge, Maine.

The following groups will be leading this work at Massachusetts Institute of Technology in order to accomplish our goals and further institutionalize our commitment to civic learning, democratic engagement, and youth participation in elections:

- Undergraduate Students
- Graduate Students
- Faculty
- Government Affairs Staff
- Student Affairs Staff

The mission of our initiative is:

- The MIT ALL IN working group, led by the MIT PKG Center for Public Service, pursues creative ways to embed civic engagement in the life of the Institute and encourage all members of the MIT community to vote.

MIT aims to increase civic learning, political engagement, and voting rates among our entire community. We pursue these goals in collaborative, nonpartisan ways by leveraging the expertise and passion of our students, staff, and faculty.

How can you improve this section? Visit the *Strengthening American Democracy Guide* and review the *Guiding Questions* to ensure your *Executive Summary* includes everything that you feel should be addressed.

II. Leadership

Jill Bassett, Associate Dean and Director, MIT PKG Center for Public Service will be overseeing our work to increase civic learning and democratic engagement on campus. They will be supported in this work by:

- Caitlin Fukumoto '24, MITvote Co-chair
- David Goldston, Director, MIT Washington Office
- Ananya Gurumurthy '23, MITvote Co-chair
- Ronnie Haas, Director, Human Resources
- Kim Haberlin, Senior Advisor to the Chancellor
- Nancy Kanwisher, Walter A. Rosenblith Professor of Cognitive Neuroscience in the Department of Brain and Cognitive Sciences
- Kelsey Merrill '23
- Paul Parravano, Co-Director, Office of Government and Community Relations
- Chris Peterson, Director of Special Projects, Admissions Office
- Andrew Turco, Captain, Campus Police
- Rebecca Tyler, Associate Director of Institute Events
- Polina Vulf, Program/Events Assistant, Institute Community and Equity Office
- Aaron Weinberger, Special Advisor to the Vice President

This coalition is diverse and inclusive of:

- Representation from different parts of campus, including student leadership, Representation from different perspectives and areas of expertise, Trusted leaders and organizations who support communities that are historically underrepresented in democracy, Leaders who can help with outreach and power building by bringing more people across campus in to our work

Our group plans to meet monthly at on Zoom

In the event that our leadership leaves campus or is no longer involved in this work, we have a succession plan in place. Leadership in the MIT PKG Center for Public Service oversees MIT's ALL IN working group and serves in an advisory capacity to MITvote, a nonpartisan student group committed to engaging an active voter community on campus.

How can you improve this section? Visit the *Strengthening American Democracy Guide* and review the *Guiding Questions* to ensure your Leadership Section includes everything that you feel should be addressed.

III. Commitment

Our institution and our campus leadership demonstrates commitment to improving civic learning and democratic engagement.

We also have had a senior leader commit to civic learning and democratic engagement on our campus.

On campus, we've seen:

- Voter education resources
- Political clubs or student organizations
- Campus leaders promoting voting
- On campus polling place
- Voter registration tables
-
- Signage promoting Election Day
-

On campus, we've experienced:

- Voting in student body elections
- Political speakers
-
-
-
- Deliberative dialogues
-

The emphasis on civic learning and democratic engagement could be increased.

How can you improve this section? Visit the *Strengthening American Democracy Guide* and review the *Guiding Questions* to ensure your *Commitment Section* includes everything that you feel should be addressed.

IV. Landscape

The following tables provide a brief overview of the landscape of our campus. This information is based on data collected from 2021-2022 when our total student enrollment was 11,934.

Enrollment Data:

Undergraduate	Graduate	Full Time	Part Time
39.00%	61.00%		

In-State	Out-of-State	International Students	On-Campus Residents	Commuter

Gender Demographics:

Men	Women	Non-Binary	Transgender

Age:

18-21	22-24	25-29	30-39	40-49	50+

Racial Demographics:

Asian	American Indian / Alaska Native	Black	Hispanic	Native Hawaiian / Pacific Islander	White	2 or More Races

How can you improve this section? Visit the [Strengthening American Democracy Guide](#) and review the [Guiding Questions](#) to ensure your Landscape Section includes everything that you feel should be addressed.

V. Goals

Before setting our civic learning and democratic engagement goals on campus, we took the following information into consideration.

We know our campus faces following challenges internally when it comes to get out the vote efforts and registering voters:

-
- We don't have someone whose job responsibility is to foster civic learning and democratic engagement on our campus.
-
-
-
-
- We don't have sustainable or consistent funding.
-
-
-

We also know our campus faces the following challenges externally when it comes to get out the vote efforts and registering voters:

-
-
-
-
-

With that said, we know our campus has the following strengths when we approach our voter engagement work:

-
-
- We have a coalition of people who are positioned to implement civic learning and democratic engagement on our campus.
- We have processes in place for registering large percentages of our students.
- We have ways in which we communicate voting information to our students.
- We use the resources readily available to develop and implement civic learning and democratic engagement on our campus.
- The voter engagement work on our campus is distributed throughout many offices and areas of expertise.
-
- Voter engagement efforts on campus are nonpartisan.

- We are able to engage student leaders for the leadership of our initiative.
- We have a working relationship with our local election office.
- We have working relationships with community partners who are invested in civic learning and democratic engagement.
-

With this in mind, we have set the three goals that we would like to achieve over the next academic year:

Educate MIT's Massachusetts-based employees on voting by mail, which was implemented during the pandemic and has become Massachusetts law.

Increase graduate student representation on the leadership team of MITvote, the Institute's nonpartisan student group.

Leverage faculty participants on MIT's ALL IN working group to engage faculty more broadly in voter registration.

We have also set three goals that we would like to achieve over the next five years:

Increase MIT's rate of graduate student voting turnout (currently 43%) to be in line with the national graduate student average (62%).

Incorporate voter registration into faculty onboarding materials.

Incorporate voter registration into retirement planning, especially for retirees who plan to move out of state.

How can you improve this section? Visit the *Strengthening American Democracy Guide* and review the *Guiding Questions* to ensure your *Goals Section* includes everything that you feel should be addressed.

VI. Strategy

Below, we have outlined a strategy describing how we will bring this vision to life in the coming months and years.

These are tactics that we **are already doing** in the **short term** (within the next year):

- We've taken steps to communicate more broadly and directly with our community about voting: We've included information about voter registration in student onboarding materials and orientation activities; committed to an annual letter to the community from the president encouraging voter registration; developed MIT-branded Zoom backgrounds encouraging voting; and held events about voting, democracy, and other political issues. We've also incorporated a voter registration reminder into several Institute systems, including one targeted at employees. We are also distributing materials about voting at the annual MIT flu clinic. And we've published stories on MIT's news website. A "register to vote" link also appears in our student financial services system and new-employee orientation.

These are tactics that we **plan to do** in the **short term**:

- We plan to hold additional events. We also plan to look for creative ways to reach students where they are, including through residence hall liaisons. Build on the momentum of our communications across the MIT community.

These are tactics that we **hope to do** in the **short term**:

- We hope to encourage faculty to add key voting dates to syllabi and in lectures. We also hope academic advisors will mention voting when they meet with their students.

These are tactics that we **are already doing** for the **long term** (beyond the next year):

- We're enhancing our communications and educational materials.

These are tactics that we **want to do** in the **long term**:

- We plan to hold additional events.

These are tactics that we **hope to do** in the **long term**:

- We hope to incorporate voter registration into course registration.

How can you improve this section? Visit the *Strengthening American Democracy Guide* and review the *Guiding Questions* to ensure your Strategy Section includes everything that you feel should be addressed.

VII. National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE)

Our campus has access to our National Study of Learning, Voting, and Engagement (NSLVE) data for . In our registration rate was . In comparison to the data from four years prior in our NSLVE report, this rate .

In , our voting rate was and our voting rate among registered students was . During this year, our voting rate was .

How can you improve this section? Visit the *Strengthening American Democracy Guide* and review the *Guiding Questions* to ensure your NSLVE section includes everything that you feel should be addressed.

VIII. Reporting & Evaluation

We plan to share this Action Plan internally when it is complete by taking the following actions:

- Email to members of our campus coalition
- Email to campus administration
-
-

We plan to share this Action Plan externally when it is complete by taking the following actions:

- Post on the campus website
-
-

We will collect feedback on this plan by:

-
-
- Regrouping with campus coalition to debrief and reflect
- Integrating feedback collection into individual campus efforts
-

We plan to evaluate our success by:

- Reviewing our NSLVE data and looking for improvements year over year
- Seeking out feedback throughout the action planning process from people outside of our action planning team
- Revisiting our goals, identifying goals achieved and not achieved, and adjusting our short and long-term goals accordingly
-

How can you improve this section? Visit the *Strengthening American Democracy Guide* and review the *Guiding Questions* to ensure your *Reporting & Evaluation Section* includes everything that you feel should be addressed.